K.V. 28.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE Church-Catechism:

CONTAINING

The Preliminary Questions,

AND

The Baptismal Covenant.

By a Divine of the Church of *England.*

1 Cor. 14. 12. *Seek that ye may excel to the Edifying of the Church.*

EXON: Printed by *Samuel Farley*, and *S. Darker*, for *Charles Yeo*, Bookseller in the *Fore-street*, 1700.

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HOLE
(Matthew)
K.v.28

To the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

Sr. Jonathan Trelawny, Bar.

Lord Bishop of EXETER.

My LORD,

THE ensuing Exercises on the Church-Catechism, *humbly crave your* Lordship's *Favour and Protection; not that they deserve, but because they need so great a Patronage: For, tho' the Catechism of the Church of* England *be justly reputed the best Composure of that Kind in the Christian World; yet the Ignorance of some, and the corrupt Designs of others, have unhappily occasioned too great a Neglect and Contempt of it: And nothing less than the Countenance and Authority of the Fathers, as well as the Diligence and Application of the Sons of the Church, are sufficient to recover its antient Honour and Use.*

'Tis this has emboldened the Author to prefix so great a Name, to so mean a Work; not from any secular Aim or Ambition, but merely to recommend it to the World, and the better to promote the great End and Design of it; which your Lordship's known Zeal and firm Adherence to the Church, may give abundant Encouragement to expect.

That your Lordship may long continue to Adorn and Support the Church-Militant here, and be at last Translated to a higher Dignity in the Church-Triumphant hereafter, is the hearty Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

And devoted Servant,

M.at forte Hole

THE PREFACE.

READER,

THOU art here presented with an Abridgment of some Catechetical Exercises, delivered in a Country Congregation; and therefore suited to the Capacity of the meanest Understandings. Some that have been either Pleased with, or Profited by them, would fain perswade themselves, that others might receive the same Benefit and Satisfaction, if they were made more publick. This hath inclin'd the Author, who is unwilling to decline any thing for the Service of his Church and Country, to venture them

abroad, to try the Experiment: If they ſhall be found any wiſe Uſeful, either to the informing the Judgment, or exciting the Affections, or helping any forward in their Chriſtian Courſe; he hath all that he aims at, and will reſt abundantly ſatisfied in the Succeſs of his Adventure; and accordingly as this ſhall be found, either Uſeful or Unſerviceable to thoſe ends, will take his meaſures; either to go forward to the other Parts of the Catechiſm in the ſame Method; or to deſiſt here.

What doleful Evils have proceeded from the lack of Catechizing, our preſent Age is an unhappy Inſtance; in which many being bred up in the Times of the Civil War, and more in the Confuſions that have thereby happened ſince, have, through the ſad Neglect of this great Duty, been deprived of the Benefit of early and well-

grounded

grounded Instructions; and thereby lost those Principles of Religion and Vertue: Which, if imbib'd sooner, might have continued longer with them, and made them more steddy in their Duty both to God and Man.

'Tis much to be feared, that the many dismal Evils that have ensued from this Neglect, are hardly to be Cured in the present Age; which, for want of being Well-principled in the beginning, is too much over-run with Atheism, and all manner of Impiety.

All our Hopes must be in the next Generation, by well-training up those that are to Live to it: That is, by laying a good Foundation in the Minds of Children and Youth, and seasoning their tender Years with more lasting Principles of Religion and Vertue.

Long accustomed and habituated Sinners, like overgrown Oaks, are sturdy and inflexible. Whereas Children and Youth, like tender Twigs, are more pliable, may be bent any way, and are capable of any Impressions. This should teach all Parents, as they tender the Welfare of their Children, above all things, to take care of their timely and pious Education.

Masters, likewise, of Tutors, Guardians, and all others that have the oversight of Youth, should Build upon this Foundation; using their best Endeavours to plant in them the Principles of Religion, and to sow the Seeds of Vertue betimes in their Hearts, that they may thereby grow up to the Service of God and their Country.

Moreover, all faithful Pastors are not only to Regard their whole Flock,

but more especially to *Feed the Lambs*, which Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, hath made the greatest Mark of their *Love*, both to him and them; and therefore the Apostle wills them, as to have *strong Meats* for well-grown Christians; so to provide *Milk for Babes*, even the *sincere Milk* of *the Word*, *that they may grow thereby*.

But, above all, it should be the Care and Wisdom of Superiors, so to Settle and Regulate interior Schools, that Children may not be poison'd by bad Principles; an Error in the first Education, as in the first Concoction, being very difficult to be Cured or Removed after.

In a Word; nothing tends more to the Peace and Prosperity of a Kingdom, than the well-training up the Members of it; and instilling good Principles betimes into those, upon whom

whom the Welfare and Happiness of it must depend.

This is the way to put a stop to the Over-flowings of Ungodliness, and to prevent that Deluge of Impiety, that else must unavoidably break in upon us.

In short; this may help to Retrieve the Antient Piety and Simplicity of our Fore-fathers; and to Mend that in the next Age, which is Amiss in this; which is the hearty Desire and Prayer of a

True Well-wisher to his

Church and Country.

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THE Introduction.

BEFORE I enter upon the Explication of our Church-Catechiſm, which is a brief, but withal, a compleat and comprehenſive Abridgment of the Chriſtian Religion; 'twill be requiſite to premiſe ſomething touching the Nature, Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of Catechizing. And here, the better to clear our way, I ſhall begin with the word Catechiſm, or Catechizing; which coming from the Greek word κατηχέω, that ſignifies to Reflect, or return a Sound, denotes a way of Inſtruction by Queſtion and Anſwer, where the Learner doth, as it were, eccho back, and return the Sound and Senſe of the Teacher.

But to go on from the Name to the Thing.

Catechiſm, or Catechizing, may be defined to be *a general Inſtruction in the fundamental Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, by way of Queſtion and Anſwer.* I ſtile it a *general Inſtruction*, to diſtinguiſh it from that other way of Teaching, known by the name of *Preaching*; which deſcends to the more particular Parts and Duties of Religion. By the *fundamental Principles of Chriſtian Religion*, I underſtand, the great and neceſſary Points both of Faith and Practice; which the Catechiſm is deſign'd to inſtruct Children in, in order to the *Building them up in their moſt Holy Faith, and making them Wiſe unto Salvation*: So that Catechizing lays the Foundation of Faith and Knowledge; whereas Preaching raiſes the Superſtructure, and buildeth thereupon: The one ſoweth the Seeds of Grace in the Heart; the other helps it to grow up into a Holy Life, and leads on to greater Maturity and Perfection. Laſtly, I ſtile it a way of Inſtruction by *Queſtion and Anſwer*, whereby 'tis farther diſtinguiſhed from *Preaching*; which is a continued Diſcourſe

course made by the Teacher, without any Reply or Repetition of the Hearer: Whereas here the Catechist Instructs by asking of Questions; and the Catechumen Learns by returning of Answers. By both which, Knowledge is more easily instill'd, and likewise makes the deeper and more lasting Impressions on the Mind.

From this brief Description of the Nature, I proceed to

The Necessity of Catechizing; which is, indeed, requisite to all the Ends of Religion. And here it may not be amiss to observe,

That in the beginning of Christianity, our blessed Saviour and his Apostles having to do with grown Persons, both Jews and Gentiles, this way of Catechizing went before Baptism, and was a necessary Preparative thereunto: For the Jews being to be Converted from Judaism, and the Gentiles from Heathenism to Christianity; 'twas necessary they should unlearn the Rites and Idolatries of the former, before they could receive the Rules, or be initiated into the Mysteries of the latter. And therefore we find, that the Apostles Commission was to *Go and Teach all*

Nations, before *they Baptized them*, Matth. 28. 19, 20. That is, being sent to Convert rude and barbarous People, that were Aliens to the Common-wealth of *Israel*, and *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without God and without Christ in the World*, they were first to instruct them in the Knowledge of God, and to Believe in Christ, before they were to be received into his Church, or be admitted to the Benefits and Priviledges of it.

But when these had embraced Christianity, and were Baptized, the Promise being to them and their Children, who became Holy, and were in Covenant by the Faith of their Parents, their Children were received to Baptism, and have been admitted into the Church ever since. Now here Instruction follows Baptism. these being to be taught afterward the Doctrine of the Christian Religion, into which they have the favour to be initiated, before they were of Age to understand it. However, we may Note,

Secondly, That tho' Catechizing sometimes follows Baptism; yet it must always go before *Confirmation*, and is a necessary Preparative to it. Here, by Confirmation, we understand

derſtand that ſolemn renewing and ratifying the Baptiſmal Vow in our own Perſons, when we come to Years of Diſcretion, that was made in our behalf by Sureties in our Infancy: Which Act is accompanied with the laying on of Hands, the Bleſſing and Prayers of the Biſhop for Grace to enable us thereunto. This is that laying on of Hands mentioned by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 6. 1, 2. which is peculiar to Confirmation; for tho' this Ceremony was uſed on other Occaſions, as particularly in the Ordination of Miniſters, yet in the forecited place, being mentioned immediately after Baptiſm, and numbered amongſt thoſe firſt Doctrines of Chriſtianity, that belong to all Chriſtians inſtructed in it, can be meant only of the Uſe of it in Confirmation; and hath been ſo underſtood and practiſed in all Ages of the Chriſtian Church.

Now Catechizing is abſolutely Neceſſary to inſtruct us in the Knowledge of what was undertaken for us in our Baptiſm, without which, we muſt be utterly incapable of knowing or receiving any Benefit by Confirmation. Again,

Thirdly, Catechizing is neceſſary to fit and prepare Chriſtians for the worthy receiving of the Holy Sacrament, for that inſtructs them in the Nature and End of that great Ordinance, together with the Qualifications requiſite to the due Participation of it: So that the omitting or ſlighting of theſe Inſtructions, are the true Reaſons why ſome receive this Holy Sacrament unworthily, and many others receive it not at all. Moreover,

Fourthly, Catechizing is neceſſary to a future Proficiency by preaching the Word, and all other religious Exerciſes; for as there is no Building without a Foundation, ſo neither is there any Edifying, or going on to Perfection, without laying the Ground-work by Catechizing. We may obſerve ſome very Zealous indeed for Preaching, and calling loudly for Lectures and Sermons; who yet for lack of Catechizing, *are ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the Truth*: And notwithſtanding all their goodly Pretences to Light and Knowledge, ſtand in need to be taught, what are the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God. Hence it comes to paſs, that ſo many unhappily miſtake the true

Means

Means of Edification, and prefer the vain Dreams and Deluſions of Mens Fancies, before wiſe, wholſom and pious Inſtructions. Wherefore,

Fifthly, Catechizing is neceſſary to preſerve Men from Errors, Hereſies and Diviſions in matters of Religion: Theſe are thoſe Tares that are too apt to ſpring up in the Field of the Church, and to choke the good Seed of ſound Doctrine planted in it; which are therefore to be weeded out, and prevented by this timely method of Inſtruction. We read in Scripture of falſe Teachers, that ſhould come in Chriſt's Name and deceive many; and likewiſe of the cunning Craftineſs of Seducers, who would *come with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs*, 2 Theſ. 2. 10. Now there is no ſuch Antidote againſt the Poiſon of their falſe Doctrines, as to be inſtructed and ſettled betimes in the Principles of Religion; for they are the ignorant and uncatechized Perſons that are drawn aſide by theſe Seducers, and like Children toſſed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. Early Inſtruction is the beſt Ballaſt to preſerve Men from theſe Blaſts, and to keep them ſound and ſteddy in the true Religion; and

therefore the Apoſtle directs, not only to learn, but *to hold faſt the form of ſound Words*: Which though it may be underſtood at large of the whole Body of the Scriptures, yet becauſe the great and weighty Truths of Religion lie there ſcattered and diffuſed up and down, and are not eaſily diſcerned or diſtinguiſhed by ordinary Capacities; therefore, this *form of ſound Words* is generally interpreted of the Apoſtles Creed, which being a brief Summary of all the neceſſary Articles of Faith, is thereby made the Teſt or Touchſtone of ſound Doctrine; by learning and underſtanding whereof, Men may be able to try and diſcern between true and falſe Doctrine, and thereby defeat the Deſigns of falſe Teachers, by receiving the one and rejecting the other.

Laſtly, Catechizing is neceſſary to preſerve Men from the Temptations to Sin, and falling into a vicious and ungodly Courſe of Life. As there are falſe Teachers that endeavour to corrupt the Doctrine of Chriſt, and to draw Men into Errors and Diviſions to deſtroy the Unity of his Church; ſo there are other evil Inſtruments, that ſeek to corrupt Mens Manners, and to draw them into

looſe, intemperate and debauched Life. Now as Catechizing is known to be the beſt Preſervative againſt the former; ſo is the well-grounding of Youth in the Principles of Religion the beſt Means to prevent the latter: For when the Mind is, by early and pious Inſtruction, poſſeſſed of good Principles, 'tis in a great meaſure armed againſt the force of Temptation; Vertue will then keep the poſſeſſion, and Vice muſt come with great ſtrength to aſſault or overcome it: Whereas an uninſtructed Perſon lies open and defenceleſs, ready to yield upon the firſt Motion, and to ſurrender upon every Temptation.

Thus we ſee what Catechizing is, namely, *a general Inſtruction in the fundamental Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, by way of Queſtion and Anſwer*: And likewiſe how neceſſary it is to all the Ends of Religion. To effect which, a Catechiſm muſt have theſe three Properties, it muſt be Short, Plain and Comprehenſive.

I. I ſay, a Catechiſm muſt be Short, that it may be the better Learn'd and the more eaſily committed to Memory; for this way of

of Inſtructing being intended for Children, it muſt be as brief and conciſe as poſſible, leſt length and tediouſneſs ſhould diſcourage them from Learning, and render it too difficult to be retained: And therefore a Catechiſm ought not to be crouded with any unneceſſary matters of Controverſy; but to conſiſt only of the fundamental Points of Faith, and the Principles of a Holy Life.

II. A Catechiſm muſt be Plain and Familiar, that it may be the better ſuited to the Capacities of the Learners, and be the more eaſily underſtood by them; and therefore it muſt not conſiſt of any nice and abſtruſe Speculations, that are more apt to puzzle and diſtract, than inform the Mind.

III. A Catechiſm muſt be Full and Comprehenſive, containing the whole of a Chriſtians Duty, and all matters neceſſary to Salvation; it muſt comprize all that is to be believed, practiſed and prayed for, that the Learner may be perfect in all ſound Knowledge, and *throughly inſtructed to every good Work.*

Theſe

These were the Qualifications of the ancient Catechisms, which were such Forms of Doctrine or sound Words, as might be easily learned and retained by all, containing nothing but what was purely Fundamental to a good Life here, and all that was Necessary to Eternal Happiness hereafter. Such as this is the Catechism of our Church, which I am about to explain to you; in which the three forecited Properties may be clearly seen, for,

1st, 'Tis a brief and concise Model of Instruction, and so not apt to clog or burden the Memory of the Learner.

2dly, 'Tis Plain and Familiar, fitted to the weakest Capacities, and so may be easily received and remembred by all, even the meanest Understandings.

3dly, 'Tis Full and Comprehensive, containing all the necessary Duties of a Christian, as well as all the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity; so that as there is nothing Redundant in it, that may be spared; so there is nothing Defective, that need to be supplied: And consequently for its Excellency and

and Uſe far exceeds all the Catechiſms, not only of the Roman Church, but likewiſe thoſe of our Modern Reformers; both which are not only burdenſom and difficult for their length; but by crouding into them many obſcure and unneceſſary Tenets, are redundant for their matter.

In ſhort then, this may ſerve to recommend this excellent Summary or Abridgment of the Chriſtian Religion, to be taught and learned of all that would go on to Perfection; for as in all Arts and Sciences we muſt begin with Principles, before we can attain to a higher Perfection; ſo in learning the Chriſtian Religion, we muſt begin firſt with the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, if we mean to arrive to any higher Degrees of Knowledge in it. This was the Method the Apoſtles uſed in teaching, and the Diſciples took in learning, the Myſteries of the Goſpel: And all that would be knowing and ſtable Chriſtians, muſt go on by the ſame Steps.

'Tis indeed, a great piece of the Care, Wiſdom and Piety of our Church, to provide ſuch a uſeful and compendious Model of Inſtruction, which it requires to be taught

and

and learned of all its Members; there are none of what Age, Parts, or Quality ſoever, but ſtand in need of, and may receive benefit by, theſe Inſtructions; the greateſt Perſons may not be aſham'd, nor the meaneſt afraid, to learn them; but as they are Uſeful and Neceſſary for all, ſo they ought not to be Deſpiſed or Neglected by any.

Wherefore, let all that have the Care or Overſight of any others, ſee that the Perſons committed to their Charge be well Catechized, and inſtructed in the Principles of Religion; and to that end, let them (as they are commanded) keep to that Catechiſm, or excellent Method of Inſtruction, which the Church hath wiſely chalked out for them, that all its Members may be bred up in the Belief and Practice of the ſame Doctrine, and not be diſtracted with various Notions, nor divided into ſundry and different Sects and Opinions, to the great Diſturbance of the Peace of the Church, and the greater Peril of their own Souls.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE Church-Catechiſm.

DISCOURSE I.

Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the Way that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

HAVING premiſed ſome things in the foregoing Introduction, touching the Nature and Neceſſity of Catechizing in general, and likewiſe of the Excellency of our Church-Catechiſm in particular;

lar; I proceed to add something farther, concerning the Benefit and Usefulness of Catechizing, the better to quicken and excite to so important and necessary a Duty: This I shall do from the words read, *Train up a Child*, &c.

They are the words of *Solomon*, who being in all Ages reputed the wisest of Men, his Advice must carry great weight with it; and being the Result of great Wisdom and large Experience, may very well deserve to be heeded, and received by all Men. And here we learn,

First, That there is a Way wherein all Men should go.

Secondly, That Children are to be train'd up betimes in this Way.

Thirdly, We have an Encouragement annex'd to so doing, *viz. When they are old they will not depart from it.*

I. The wise Man here plainly supposes, That there is a Way wherein all Men ought to go; and this is double, the

One

One is, The Way of a particular Calling, Trade, or Courſe of Life, wherein they are to employ themſelves for their bodily Suſtenance. The

Other is, The Way of a general Calling, Profeſſion, or Courſe of Religion, wherein they are to Act for the Comfort and Salvation of their Souls; the one appertains to them as Men, and the other as Chriſtians; in both which, all Men are to be engaged for their preſent and eternal Welfare.

Firſt, I ſay, there is a Way of a particular Calling, Trade, or Courſe of Life, wherein all Men are required to walk; and this is to be done to provide partly for their own private Wants and Neceſſities, partly for the Neceſſities of the Publick, and partly likewiſe to prevent the many Evils and Dangers of Idleneſs.

Every Man's private Wants and Neceſſities call upon him to walk in the Way of ſome Calling for the Supply of them; for God Almighty deals out his Bleſſings only to ſuch as labour and ſeek for them; *'Tis the*

diligent Hand (saith *Solomon*) *that maketh rich*, whilst the Lazy Person and the Sluggard sink into Want and Beggary. 'Twas ordained from the beginning, (*Gen.* 3. 19.) That *in the Sweat of their Brows all Men should eat their Bread.* And therefore the Apostle (2 *Thes.* 3. 10, 11, 12.) ordered, that *such as would not Work should not Eat*; yea, he reckons those *in the number of disorderly Walkers, that Work not at all*: And *them that are such, he exhorts, that with quietness they work and eat their own Bread.* As if it were not their own Bread, unless it were got by their own Labour. A Calling then is necessary for every one to be engaged in, in which they are commanded *to Work with their Hands, that they may have lack of nothing*, 1 *Thes.* 4. 11, 12. 2 *Thes.* 3. 11, 12.

Again, Not only Mens private Necessities, but likewise those of the publick, require them to walk in the Way of some particular Trade or Calling: A Heathen could tell us, *That we are not born for our selves only, but our Friends and Country claim a share in us, whose Good and Welfare we ought to consult together with our own.* Now this cannot be, without some particular Calling

ling or Courſe of Life, wherein to employ our ſelves for the publick Good. God Almighty hath placed Mankind in a mutual Need and Dependence on each other, inſomuch, that as the Members of the natural Body are all helpful and ſerviceable to one another, ſo all the Members of the politick Bodies of States and Kingdoms, are to be aiding and aſſiſting to every part for the good of the whole: And therefore the Apoſtle wills, *Epheſ.* 4. 28. *All Men to Work with their Hands the Thing that is good, that they may have to give to him that needeth.*

Not that every one is required to engage in manual or mechanical Trades, and litterally to Work with the Hand; but that they are, in ſome honeſt way or other, to be employed for the Benefit of Mankind; for ſome may Work with the Head, and aſſiſt with their Counſel and Advice; others may be Eyes to the Blind, to direct them in their way; or Feet to the Lame, to help them forward in it: But ſtill every one muſt have ſome Way or Profeſſion in which he is to go, otherwiſe he is an unprofitable Burden of the Earth, and doth but cumber the Ground on which he treads; yea, ſuch a one is not only an unprofitable, but a pernicious Mem-

ber of the World, for he lives only upon the Spoils of the Creation, and brings on Ruin both on himself and others. Moreover,

Thirdly, The end of those Gifts and Talents, we are instructed withal, is, that we should employ and improve them too, in some good Profession, or Course of Life; God Almighty, like the Housholder in the Parable, hath committed sundry Talents to his Servants and Followers, as those of Health, Wealth, Wisdom, Time, Strength, and other Abilities, though some have more, and others less, yet all have some, for which they are accountable, according to the measure and proportion they have received. Now these are to be exercised and improved in some particular Calling or Profession, that they may escape the doom of *Slothful*, and receive *the reward of good and faithful Servants*. Beside,

Lastly, The many sad and doleful Effects of Idleness, may convince all Men of the Necessity of a particular Trade or Calling, wherein they are to go; without which, they wander and fall into many unspeakable Evils,

vils, by waſting their Time and Subſtance, by abuſing their Parts and God's Creatures, and perverting the End of all his Gifts, to their great Trouble and Diſquiet here, and to the final Ruin at laſt both of Body and Soul.

But as there is a Way of a particular Calling, wherein every one is to go for their bodily Suſtenance; ſo there is,

II. A general Way of Religion, wherein they are all to walk as Chriſtians for the Salvation of their Souls: And though the former be various, according as the different Inclinations and Abilities of private Perſons, and likewiſe the various Neceſſities of the publick, require; yet the latter is but one, wherein they are all to go Hand in Hand together, without Diſcord or Diviſion, for their common Salvation. This is the Way of Chriſtianity, which is ſometimes called a Race, that every one is to run; ſometimes a Warfare, which we are all to accompliſh, before we can attain to the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

Now this Way of Religion, conſiſts chiefly of what we are to Believe, wha we are to Practiſe, and what we are to Pray for in

order to our Salvation; the first of which is briefly summed up in the Apostles Creed, the second in the ten Commandments, the third in the Lord's-Prayer; which together with the Doctrine of Repentance, and the Holy Sacraments, are the principal Heads or Parts of the Church Catechism.

Thus having directed to the Way that we should go, together with the two great Paths of it, that lead to everlasting Life; I proceed to the

Next part of the wise Man's Advice, which is to *Train up Children betimes in this Way:* That is, to train them up in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of a Trade or Profession, that they may live honestly and comfortably here in this World; but chiefly to train them up in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of Religion, that they may live happily for ever in the next. Both these are inculcated by many Precepts and Examples in Holy Scripture: *I know*, says God, concerning *Abraham*, *that he will command his Children, and his Houshold after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment*, Gen. 18. 19. *Joshua* resolved, *that he and his House should serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. 15. The Israelites were commanded to *Teach*

their

their Children the God of their Fathers, and to remember the wonderful Things that had been done for them,, Pſ. 78. In the New Teſtament, Parents are required to inſtruct their Children, and *to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* St. *Luke* confirms *Theophilus* in the certainty of thoſe things, *in which he had been inſtructed*, Luke 1. 4. And St. *Paul* commends *Timothy*, that *from a Child he had learn'd and known the Holy Scriptures*, 2 Tim. 3. 15 The Holy Scriptures abound with Precepts and Examples to this purpoſe, requiring Children to be trained up in the Knowledge and Fear of God.

This *Solomon* would have done betimes; *Train them up*, ſaith he, *betimes in the Way they ſhould go*: And that, firſt, becauſe they bring into the World with them, ſtrong propenſities to Evil, and great averſeneſs to that which is Good; which things are to be corrected in the beginning, by an early and pious Education, before they grow Head-ſtrong, and improve into vicious Habits and Cuſtoms. If the Seeds of Vertue be not ſow'd betimes, Vice will ſoon get Ground, and the Mind, like a neglected Garden, will be over-run with Weeds and Briers. And therefore, Ver-

tue ſhould have the ſtart, and Children ſhould ſet out betimes in their Chriſtian Courſe, in which becauſe they are like to meet with many Difficulties and Temptations, 'tis good to have their Hearts eſtabliſhed with Grace, and their Minds fortified with the Knowledge of Chriſt, that they may the better withſtand them. And as Children have great need to be thus timely inſtructed; ſo is Youth the fitteſt ſeaſon to inſtil it into them, for Religion never thrives more kindly than when 'tis planted betimes, and the foundation of it is laid in an early Piety. Youth is the Age of Ductility, when the Mind is ſoft and tender, and like Wax, capable of any Impreſſions, which makes it of conſequence to ſtamp it with the beſt: And being like a Twig apt to bend, great care is to be taken to bend it the right way.

Parents then, and Tutors, ſhould carefully improve this Time, and inſtil good Inſtructions, when the Mind is ſo pliable and fit to receive them. By this means, they may eaſily inſinuate and plant good Principles into them, which will take off the Difficulties of Religion, and inſenſibly reconcile them to the ſevereſt Acts of a good Life; inſomuch, that what ſeems hard to an over-

grown

grown Sinner, will be found eaſy and pleaſant to one that imbibed theſe timely Inſtructions.

Childhood then, and Youth, are the times of entering Men into the Way that they ſhould go, before evil Counſel and Example clap a wrong Byaſs upon them, to turn them out of it: And being thus initiated betimes, the wiſe Man here adds, that *when they are old they will not depart from it.* Which is the

Laſt Thing to be ſpoken to, *viz.* The Encouragement here given to Catechizing or Training up Youth, from the laſting Impreſſions it leaves behind it, *When they are old,* &c.

There are two ways of departing from the Way that we ſhould go, either by falling into Idleneſs and Debauchery, on the one Hand; or by falling into Sects and Diviſions, on the other; by the one, we depart from the Way of our Calling, as Men; by the other, from the Way of Religion, as Chriſtians. Now the well-training up Children betimes, is the beſt Preſervative againſt both; for,

Firſt,

First, The inuring them in the beginning to the Business of a Calling, will arm them against Idleness, and the many Evils and Debaucheries that flow from it; the Work and Business which to others is irksome and tedious, will become easy and delightful to those that are trained up and accustomed to it, and by that means keep them from departing from it.

Again, The well-grounding of Children in the Principles of Religion, will in a great measure arm them against the Wiles and Artifices of Seducers; this will help to keep them sound and stedfast in the Faith, and not to be easily led away by the Error of the Wicked.

For when Truth hath taken the first Possession of the Mind, Errors and false Doctrines will find no admission. The true reason of that Instability in Religion, as well as Corruption of Manners, that abound in the present Age, is the lack of Catechizing, and training up Children in the way of Religion, in the which they should go; for where this is neglected, or the Mind poisoned with evil Principles,

it

it either casts off all Religion, or embraces a very bad one.

Hence our Saviour compares such as lay a good Foundation of Instruction betimes, *to a Wise Man that built his House on a Rock*, which remained firm and unshaken, and stood the shock of the greatest Tempest. Whereas they that lay none, or bad Principles in the beginning, are resembled to the *Foolish Man, that built his House on the Sand, Mat.* 7. 27. which was shaken with every Wind, and could not stand the force of the slightest Storm.

From this whole Discourse we may

First, Lament the lack of this early Instruction, which is the great cause of all the Looseness and Immoralities; and likewise of all the Errors and Divisions of the present Times.

And Lastly, we may exhort all Parents and Masters to be mindful of this great and weighty Duty, to Catechize their Children and Servants, and train them up betimes in the way that they should go. And since the first Instructions take such fast

fast hold, and make such deep and lasting Impressions on the Mind, they should take care to season their tender Years with good Principles and an early Piety; least Children, instead of a Blessing and Comfort to their Parents, prove through their own Neglect, only a Curse and Grief to them.

DIS-

DISCOURSE II.

Acts 11. 26. *Lat. part. And the Disciples were called Christians first at* Antioch.

HAVING shewed the Nature, Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of Catechizing, I come now to the Catechiſm it ſelf; where the firſt Queſtion is, *What is your Name?* to which the Anſwer is, N. *or* M. *&c.*

The deſign of this Queſtion is,

I. To comply with the Weakneſs of Children; and by an eaſy and familiar Queſtion at firſt, to draw them on to learn and receive Inſtruction; their Name being the firſt thing they learn or remember, by giving a ready Anſwer to that, they may be encouraged and emboldened to rehearſe more: whereas a harder Queſtion in the beginning might be apt to puzzle and diſcourage them from going any farther. Again,

II. This Queſtion is deſigned to lead them on to the Knowledge and Remembrance of their

their Baptism; which being the first and greatest thing that was done for them, ought to be first learnt and minded by them.

Lastly, Because together with our Name we receive our Christianity: The design of this Question is to put Children in mind of their christian Profession, of which the Name is the outward Badge or Cognizance; and therefore is called the Christian Name, because we receive that and our Christianity together: So that by asking the Name here, is in effect to ask, What Religion you are of? Whose Followers are you? Or, by whose Name are you called? Which is a fit entrance or beginning of a catechetical Instruction. So that this Question is not so vain and useless, as some may imagine or object; being so well suited to the tender Years of Children, and so easy an Introduction to farther and more useful Instructions.

But for the better understanding hereof, we may observe farther, That every one beareth at least two Names:

The one is that of the Stock, Family or Kindred, to which they belong; and this they have by Descent from their Parents, whose

whoſe Name they bear, and is generally ſtil'd the Sirname.

The other is a Name of Grace and Favour, added or given in our Baptiſm or Admiſſion into the Church; and this is called the Chriſtian Name: The former ſignifies that we are Men, belonging to the Family of our Parents and Kindred; the latter, that we are Chriſtians, engrafted into Chriſt's Family and bear his Name.

And this may ſuggeſt the Reaſon, why the Chriſtian Name is ever placed before the Sirname, it being a Title importing a nobler Deſcent and Dignity. 'Tis a higher Honour to be a Chriſtian, than to be a Man; by the one we are miſerable, by the other in a way of being happy: our ſpiritual Regeneration in Chriſt, is a Matter of greater Comfort and better Hope, than our natural Generation; and our Admiſſion into the Church, of much greater Conſequence, than our Entrance into the World; ſince by this we enter into *a Vale of Tears and Sorrow*; by the other we are led there, *where all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, and ſighing and ſobbing ſhall flee away.* Moreover we are to conſider,

The

The Use of Names, which serves chiefly for these three Ends, for Distinction, Ornament and Instruction.

First, Names are given and used for Distinction, that Men may be known from one another: Thus the Sirname, which we derive from our Ancestors, and receive immediately from our natural Parents, distinguishes us from others of a different Stock and Family. The Christian Name that is added to it, distinguishes us from those of the same House and Family, as well as others; and likewise from those of a different Religion, for the Name of Christian, distinguishes us from Jews, Turks and Infidels. Again,

Secondly, Names are given sometimes for Ornament: Thus all Titles of Honour, all Names of Offices and Degrees, are used not only to distinguish, but to raise and elevate some Persons above others, to adorn their Character, and procure the Respect and Veneration of Mankind; such are the Titles of *Kings*, *Lords*, *Knights*, and the like: And here we may note, That as the *Name of Christ is above every Name*, so the Name of Christian is above all other Titles whatever; for

for theſe are only earthly Glories, that will ſoon fade and be laid in the Duſt; whereas the other hath a more heavenly Riſe, and will not only laſt, but enoble us to all Eternity.

Laſtly, Names are given likewiſe for Inſtruction: This is the deſign of all great Names and Titles, namely, to mind thoſe that wear them, that they act worthily and ſuitable to them, and to avoid all baſe things that may blemiſh or diſhonor them: and this is the end of our Chriſtian Name, as we ſhall have occaſion to ſhew after.

Thus we ſee the Nature, End and Uſe, of Names, and more particularly of that which is here in the beginning of the Catechiſm enquired after; for beſide the Name of our Houſe and Family, which we have by Birth, we have another Chriſtian Name, which we receive by Baptiſm; being thereby, as it were, new-born, and received into the Houſhold of Faith, becoming the Servants and Followers of Chriſt, by taking his Name, and thereby diſtinguiſhed from all others, who either know him not, or diſown him.

But because this sacred Name was not given by chance or for nothing, will be requisite to enquire into the Original, the Importance and the Obligation of it: For the

First, The Rise and Original of this Name, our Text tells us the Time when, the Place where, and the Manner how it was given; all which are contained in these Words, *The Disciples were called Christians first at* Antioch: where the Holy Ghost having thought fit to record the Time, Place and Occasion, of this memorable Action, it will not be amiss to endeavour for a right Understanding, and to make a right Use and Improvement of them. To which end I must enquire,

First, What they were called before.

Secondly, What was the Motive or Occasion of changing the Name.

Thirdly, How, or in what manner, this new Name was given.

1st. The Disciples receiving a new Name, and being called Christians first at *Antioch*, leads us to enquire what they were called before:

fore: And here were we find ſeveral Names and Titles given to them in the ſeveral Ages of the Church. In the Old Teſtament, they were firſt called *the Sons of God*, which Name continued from *Adam* to *Abraham*; after which they were ſtiled *the Seed of* Abraham *and the faithful*; which continued to the days of *Jacob*, who being named *Iſrael* from his prevalency with God, the twelve Tribes that deſcended from him, were for that reaſon called Iſraelites: After which, the Kingdom being divided between *Iſrael* and *Judah*, they were called ſometimes Jews and ſometimes Iſraelites, which Names continued till the coming of the *Meſſias*; after which they were ſometimes called Nazarites, ſometimes Galileans; at other times they were ſtiled Brethren and Diſciples; which Names continued till this great Meeting of the Brethren and Diſciples at *Antioch*, where the Name of Chriſtian was ſolemnly given to them; for the *Diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt at* Antioch. And this will lead us to conſider,

2dly, The Motive and Occaſion of giving them this Name of Chriſtians; which, as appears by this and the foregoing Chapter, was briefly this;

St. *Peter*, who was the Apostle of the Circumcision, and preached only to the Jews, was warned of God in a Vision, *not to account the Gentiles common or unclean*, but freely *to eat and converse with them*; thereby perceiving, (as himself declares) *that God was no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*; accordingly finding that *Cornelius* and many other of the Gentiles believed in the Lord Jesus, and received the Holy Ghost as well as the Jews, he preached to them, and commanded them *to be baptized in the name of the Lord*, as we may read at large in the foregoing Chapter.

In the beginning of this, we find the Brethren of the Circumcision took Offence, and contended with *Peter* about this freedom, till he had declared the Vision whereby his Commission was enlarged, and how he was ordered to converse with, and preach unto the Gentiles; at which they held their Peace and glorified God, *who had to the Gentiles also granted Repentance unto Life.* Hereupon the scattered Brethren came to *Antioch*, where *Paul* and *Barnabas*, with many others, Assembled likewise; and when both Jews and Gentiles promiscuously received the Gospel, and

and were united into *one Body of the Church*; they were united *in one Name too*, and were called *Christians first at* Antioch: where the Partition-wall between Jew and Gentile being broken down, and both admitted into one Fold, all Names of Distinction were taken away, and they became all one in Christ Jesus; this is implied in this new Name of Christian given to them, which Name is continued to them to this day.

We find a Prophecy in *Isaiah*, That *when the Gentiles should come in and see the Righteousness of God, all Kings should behold their Glory, and they should be called by a new Name, which the mouth of the Lord should name*, Isai. Chap. 62. Verse 2. This Prophecy is supposed to have been fulfilled at this time, when the Disciples were all called *Christians first at* Antioch; at which time this new Name was given both to the Jews and Gentiles; and by this divine Signature were both marked up for Christ's Flock. And this will lead us to the

Next thing to be considered, which was the Manner how this Name was given: And that, we may well think, was not in a common or ordinary way, but by some di-

vine Impulse and Direction, for the new Name mentioned by *Isaias*, was such *as the mouth of the Lord should name.* Meaning, that it should come from his Mouth, or be ordered and directed by his holy Spirit: this some have thought to be implied in the Word here used in the Original, which is not ἐκαλέσωσο, but χρηματίσα', which signifies not an ordinary way of naming a thing, but the doing of it in a divine and oracular Manner; and gives us to understand, that this Name of Christian was given not upon a slight Occasion, but for weighty Reasons, and by God's own Appointment.

I shall conclude this Point by inferring two or three things from what hath been said upon it. And,

First, We learn hence the Dignity of this Christian Name, which is not of a human Extraction, but hath a divine Original; it was not given by the Will of Man, but of God, and had it's rise from the direction of his holy Spirit.

For when the Disciples were upon a great Occasiod met together, this Name was solemnly given to them from above; which Name

Name is by the Grace and Favour of Heaven derived down to us, the Hiſtory, as well as the Myſtery of which, ſtands here upon Record in Holy Scripture; ſo that this Name, by reaſon of the Relation it bears and gives us unto Chriſt, is above every Name, and far ſurpaſſes all earthly Titles whatever; which ſhould teach us to have a due Honor and Regard for it, and to doe nothing that may undervalue or diſparage it.

Secondly, This Name of Chriſtian being given upon the uniting of the Jew and Gentile into one Church, may put us in mind of keeping *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace:* And being Incorporated into *one Body*, we ſhould all learn to be of *one Mind.* We find ſo it was with the firſt Chriſtians, upon their receiving of this Name, who *continued ſtedfaſt in one Fellowſhip and Communion*, and were *daily in the Temple with one accord, bleſſing and praiſing God.* After which, when by the Inſinuation of falſe Teachers, ſome of them began to fall into Parties and Factions, we find the Apoſtle beſeeching them by *the Name of Chriſt, that they would all ſpeak the ſame thing, that there might be no diviſions among them, but that they would perfectly joyn*

together in the same Mind and the same Judgement, 1 Cor. 1. 10. where the Apostle urges the Name of Christ and Title of Christians, to engage them to Unity, and preserve them from Sects and Divisions. Again he minds the Ephesians, who were some of these Gentile Converts, that they were all *called into one Calling*; meaning, that they were all called Christians, and that they all had but one *Hope of this Calling*; meaning that common Salvation purchased by Jesus Christ, and from thence presses them to go hand in hand together in the pursuit of it, without Discord or Division, *Eph.* 4. 45. Moreover we find him pressing the Philippians by the Name of Christ, and all the Endearments of Christianity, to be of *one Accord, and one Mind.*

In a Word, The sacred Name of Christian signifying an Owner and Follower of Christ, wills all that wear it, to walk on unanimously in the way that he hath chalk'd out and gone before them, without deserting him, or following any other.

Lastly From what hath been said concerning the Christian Name, all Parents and Sureties may learn to give Children such Names,

Names, as have been famous and honourable for the Vertues and good Actions of thoſe that bore them; for this may ſtir them up to Imitation, and make them aſhamed to diſhonour or come ſhort of them. There are ſome Names that have been rendred Infamous, by the vile and wicked Actions of thoſe that have been called by them, as *Judas*, *Ananias*, *Elymas*, and the like; which, if there be any Vertue or Influence at all in Names, may be apt rather to prompt Men to Evil, than make them Followers of that which is Good; ſuch as theſe ought to be carefully avoided: there are others that may, perhaps, prove a Spur to noble and vertuous Undertakings, from the Example of ſuch as have adorn'd them, and theſe are fitteſt to be made choice of. And therefore it hath been an antient and laudable Practice, to give Children the Names of the Apoſtles, Saints, and Martyrs, and other renowned Heroes, whoſe Vertues ſhould be rehearſed to them, that they may be quickened and encouraged to do likewiſe; which is a PRACTICE worthy to be obſerved and kept to.

Thus

Thus having shewed the Original of the Christian Name, *viz.* The Time when, the Place where, together with the Reason why, and the Manner how it was first given: all which afford Matter of great Benefit and Instruction.

'Twill be requisite to add something touching the Importance of that Name, and the Obligation it lays upon all that wear it; which shall be done in the next.

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

2 Tim. 2. 19. *Lat. part. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from Iniquity.*

I Shewed in my last, the Original of the Christian Name, together with the Time, Place and Occasion upon which it was given: I proceed now to consider, the Importance of this Name, and the Obligation it lays upon all that bear it; which I shall do from these words of the Apostle, *Let every one*, &c. where I must enquire,

I. What is meant by *naming the Name of Christ.*

II. What we are to understand by *departing from Iniquity.*

III. I must shew the Obligation, that results from this Name so to do. For the

First, By *naming the Name of Christ*, no more nor no less, is meant, than the calling one self a Christian; for to name the Name of

of any one, is a Hebrew Phraſe, and ſignifies to have his Name called upon us, or to be denominated from him. In this ſenſe, we find it frequently uſed in the New Teſtament; *Do they not Blaſpheme that worthy Name by which ye are called*? or which is called upon you, meaning the Name or Title of Chriſtian, *Jam.* 2. 7. And what St. *Peter* ſaith, *If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt*, he after explains by, *If ye ſuffer as a Chriſtian*, 1 Pet. 4. 14, 16. By which it appears, that to name the Name of Chriſt, is to call our ſelves, or to be called Chriſtians. But,

Secondly, What are we to underſtand by *departing from Iniquity*, which is here given in charge to all that thus name the Name of Chriſt? In anſwer to which, two things are plainly intended by it.

The one Negative, that is to eſchew all ſuch things as are contrary to our Chriſtian Profeſſion.

The other Poſitive, to follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame.

Both theſe are more fully expreſſed in *Titus* 2. 11, 12, 13, *&c. The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation*, that is, the Grace of Chriſt,

Chriſt, by which we are admitted to be Chriſtians, and called to a State of Salvation, *teaches us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; and to live righteouſly, ſoberly and godly in this preſent World*, &c. Theſe, and all other parts of the Chriſtian Life, are implied here in *departing from Iniquity*; in which more is included than ſeems to be expreſſed.

And 1ſt, To *depart from Iniquity*, is to eſchew all thoſe things that are contrary to our Profeſſion; this is the firſt part of every Chriſtian's Duty, which is expreſſed in the Epiſt. to *Titus*, *by denying all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; and here in our Text, by *departing from Iniquity*; and imports the caſting off the whole Body of Sin, or a thorow abandoning the Love and Practice of all Vice and Wickedneſs. For though Iniquity be ſometimes uſed to ſignify only Injuſtice or Unrighteouſneſs; yet here 'tis of a larger ſignification, and includes all manner of Impiety and Immoralities, which are, indeed, but ſo many Acts of Injuſtice to God, our Neighbour and our ſelves. That all ſuch Breaches of God's Laws are contrary to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, will be evident to any that conſiders the Nature of it, and the Engagements

gagements it lays upon all that enter into it. The Christian Religion is an Institution of the strictest Piety; its Precepts are all holy, just and good; its Promises are all Encouragements to a holy and vertuous Life; its Threatnings are the Terrors of the Lord, to awe and affright Men from all vicious and sinful Courses, in which *the Wrath of God is revealed against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men.* When we enter upon it, we profess to believe the Truth of all these things; and that not barely to entertain our Minds with the Speculation of them; but to regulate our Practice, and to lead our Lives according to them.

Now all Sin and Wickedness is directly contrary to this Profession, it shews that we do not believe what we pretend to, and are not what we would be thought to be, which is the vilest piece of Hypocrisy, yea, a downright mocking and dissembling with God. And therefore to *depart from Iniquity*, is to shun all such things as are opposite to Christianity; and to do nothing that may grosly thwart or contradict it. But this is not all, for the Apostles Charge here wills, all that name the Name of Christ, not only to avoid all that is contrary to their Profession; but likewise, 2dly,

2dly, To follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame; this is the ſecond and poſitive part of a Chriſtians Duty; the former is expreſſed in the Epiſt. to *Titus*, by *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; the latter, by *living righteouſly, ſoberly and godly in this preſent world*: 'Tis not enough to *ceaſe to do evil*, though that be a great Advance in Religion; but we muſt *learn to do well*, to compleat the Character of a good Chriſtian; 'tis but half our Duty to abandon Vice, to make it entire, we muſt live in the Practice of all Vertue: For Chriſt *gave himſelf for us, not only to redeem us from all iniquity, but to purify to himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The Chriſtian Profeſſion requires purity of Heart, and chaſtity of Body; and therefore wills us, as to *cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, ſo to *perfect holineſs in the fear of God.* To act ſuitably to our Profeſſion, is to love, honour and fear God above all things; to practiſe an univerſal Honeſty and Charity towards our Neighbour; and to preſerve an unſpotted Chaſtity and Sobriety towards our ſelves: Theſe things are agreeable to our Profeſſion, and to live in the Practice of them, is to *walk*

worthy

worthy of the Vocation whereunto we are called; 'tis to walk before God unto all well-pleasing, and *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*.

In a word, to *depart from Iniquity*, is to bid adieu to all vicious and sinful Courses; and because the leaving one way, does evermore ingage us in another; to depart from the ways of Sin, will lead us into the Paths of Holiness and Vertue: in which, all that name the Name of Christ are here required to walk: And this will lead us to the

Third thing to be treated of from these words, namely, the Obligation that rusults from our Christian Name so to do. And this will be evident to any that consider,

1st, That every one that taketh the name of a Christian publickly, owns Christ for his Teacher; he thereby becomes a Disciple of his, and as a Scholar yields up himself to him as his Master and Instructer; and, indeed, well he may, for he is the wisest of all Teachers, one that came from God, and who alone hath the words of eternal Life. Now a Scholar, you know, is obliged to hearken to his Master, to believe his Teacher, and surrender himself to his Instruction and Discipline,

cipline; without which, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould Learn any thing from him, or behave himſelf ſuitable to the Relation he bears to him. Hence, he that calls himſelf a Mahometan, profeſſeth to own the Doctrine of *Mahomet*; he that ſtiles himſelf a Lutheran or Socinian, declares his embracing the Tenets of *Luther* and *Socinus*: In like manner, he that calls himſelf a Chriſtian, profeſſes to entertain the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, to believe the whole Goſpel delivered by him, and to aſſent to the Truth of all the Precepts, Promiſes and Threatnings contained in it.

Seeing then, the Deſign of all theſe is to ſubdue Sin, and to engage us in the Practice of Holineſs and Virtue; he that profeſſes to believe all this (which is done by all that call themſelves Chriſtians), muſt ſtand obliged, in Reaſon and Conſcience, to Live and Act accordingly. Again,

2dly, Every one that nameth the Name of Chriſt, owns himſelf a Follower of Chriſt's Example, as well as Doctrine; he takes him for his Guide and Pattern, and therefore ſtands obliged to imitate him; *Let the ſame mind be in you*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that was in Chriſt Jeſus, and walk in love, as he al-*

so hath loved us. Indeed, Christ often sets himself as a Pattern before us, and bids us *learn of him*, and tread in his steps; and the Scripture frequently represents him under those Titles that render him an Example to us, and require our Following and Imitation of him: He is called our Prince, our Captain, our Leader, our Guide; all which terms import, that he hath gone every step before us, and thereby mark'd out our way for us.

Now Christ having given us the highest Example of Holiness and Virtue (for *he did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth*; but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens*) all that call themselves Christians, are obliged to follow his steps, and to come as near him as they can, by a pious Imitation of his most Holy Life. But, beside all this,

3dly, Every one that nameth the Name of Christ, hath engaged to *depart from Iniquity*. This was solemnly done at their Baptism, as we shall shew hereafter; for when they received their Christian-name at the Font, they publickly renounced all Sin and Wickedness; and by taking the name of Christ upon them,

them, gave themſelves up to the Conduct of his Precepts and Example: Inſomuch, that we muſt either *depart from Iniquity*, or depart from the moſt ſolemn Engagements; and without denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we muſt deny the moſt ſacred Vows and Promiſes.

Thus we ſee the many and great Obligations, that reſult from the Name of Chriſtians, to lead holy and ſuitable Lives; it remains only, that I exhort you to

Anſwer theſe Obligations, and live accordingly. Let every one that calleth on, or calls himſelf by, the name of Chriſt, *depart from Iniquity*; let none debaſe that high and honorable Title, or wear it about as an empty inſignificant Name; remember whoſe Name it is, and what it imports; and labour to Live and Act ſuitable to it. We ſhould be very ſorry not to be thought or ſtiled Chriſtians, let us not then deceive our ſelves with the bare Title; but fill up that noble Character, and make good our Profeſſion, by walking worthy of, and ſuitable to it. To this end, conſider the Fitneſs and Reaſonableneſs of ſo doing, together with the Indecency of the contrary; What can be more agreeable to Reaſon and good Manners than

to be what we profess? And what can be more absurd, than to pretend to great Matters and perform nothing like it? He who answers the Design and Dignity of a Christian, acts like one endowed with a Mind and Reason; but he whose Religion is only in Name and Pretence, whose Actions give the Lye to his Profession, acts of all Men the most absurdly, and lives in a direct opposition to all the Principles of Decency and Discretion. For the Heathens to wallow in Vice and Uncleanness, that served Gods as bad as themselves, can be no great wonder: But for Christians to do so, that profess themselves Disciples of the Holy Jesus, who hath given the best Rules, the best Assistances, the best Encouragements, and was himself the best Example of a Holy Life, must be highly unbecoming.

Again 2dly, To live like a Christian, is to Adorn our Profession, and bring Honour to our Saviour, whose Name we bear; whereas the contrary, is the greatest Blemish and Reproach we can bring to both. When we walk by the Rules and Precepts of Christianity, we honour our Master, and credit his Religion; we set it forth to the best Advantage,

tage, and recommend it to the Love and Practice of Mankind, making it look with ſuch an amiable Countenance, as to invite others to embrace it: But a wicked and ungodly Life, brings Diſgrace to our ſelves, and a Scandal to our Profeſſion: This drives others from it, and inſtead of making Proſelites, makes only Enemies to it; yea, this occaſions Atheiſm; and makes many deſpiſe and throw off Religion, when they ſee no better Fruits of it in the Lives of thoſe that pretended to it: This cauſes *the name of God to be blaſphemed*, and his Ways *evil ſpoken of*; ſuch Men, like the Spies mentioned by *Joſhua*, bring an evil Report upon the Land of *Canaan*; and deal with Chriſt, as *Simeon* and *Levi* did with *Jacob*, making him to *ſtink among the Inhabitants of the Land*: The moſt bitter Invectives that were ever formed againſt the Chriſtian Religion, never wounded it half ſo deep, as the wicked Lives of thoſe that profeſs it.

In a word, nothing tends more to the Ornament and Propagation of Chriſtianity, than a Holy Life; and nothing ſerves more to ſupplant and hinder its Progreſs, than an unſuitable Converſation.

Laſtly, To live anſwerable to our Profeſſion, is a Matter of great Comfort here, and will bring us to a much greater Reward hereafter; for this Intitles us to all the rich and precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, and gives an undoubted Right to all that Chriſt hath obtained and purchaſed for his Church; whereas the contrary, is a Matter of infinite Loſs and Danger to the Soul. The true Chriſtian that anſwers his Profeſſion and Character, ſhall receive the Reward of Chriſtianity; that is, ſhall be made Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; *an Inheritance immortal, incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us:* Whereas the titular or nominal Chriſtian, that only uſurps the Name of Chriſt for bad Purpoſes, and wears about his Profeſſion as a Cloak to hide his evil Practices, ſhall have his Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers: their glorious Pretences will be ſo far from helping them, that they will ſerve only to ſink them into the deeper Condemnation. The Heathens, that had no Knowledge of Chriſt, and made no Profeſſion of him, ſhall fare better at the laſt Day than ſuch as pretended to and abuſed both; for our Saviour himſelf declares, That

it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre *and* Sydon, who wanted the Means of Knowledge, *than for* Corazin *and* Bethſaida, who made a bad Uſe of them: And St. *Peter* tells us, That 'tis better *not to have known the ways of righteouſneſs, than having known them, to turn from the holy commandment.* Many, ſaith Chriſt, *will come in my name, and deceive many*; meaning, that they would not only deceive themſelves with an empty Name, but impoſe upon others by their vain Pretences to it; of theſe, he declares, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. *Many will ſay at the laſt Day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* Who yet, for not departing from Iniquity, ſhall be bid to *depart from him as workers of Iniquity.*

DURHAM

To Conclude, Let us ſtand upon the Dignity of our Chriſtian name, and do nothing that may blemiſh or diſparage it; but rather let us adorn our Profeſſion with the Practice of all Chriſtian Virtues; *that whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are lovely, and of,* &c. we may not only think on, but alſo do theſe things.

DISCOURSE IV.

Luke 1. 59. *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to Circumcise the Child, and they called him* Zacharias, *after the name of his Father.*

HAVING explained the first Question in the Catechism, and shewed what is necessary to be known, touching the Original and Obligation of the Christian-name: I proceed now to the

Second Question; *Who gave you that Name?*

The Answer; My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In which Question and Answer, Three Things must be spoken to, and explained.

I. The

I. The Parties that gave the Chriſtian-name, *Our Godfathers*, &c.

II. The Time when this Chriſtian-name is given, *in our Baptiſm.*

III. The Benefit and Priviledges we receive thereby, *wherein I was made a Member of Chriſt, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* I begin at this time with the

Firſt of theſe, *viz.* The Parties that gave the Chriſtian-name, and they are here ſaid to be our Godfathers and Godmothers.

Now though this be an ancient, uſeful and laudable Practice; yet becauſe it hath been of late Years made a Matter of Diſpute and Contention, 'twill be requiſite to ſpeak the more fully to it; which I ſhall do from theſe words, *It came to paſs, that on the eighth day they Circumciſed the Child, and called him* Zacharias, *after the name of his Father.*

The words are part of the Hiſtory of the Birth and Circumciſion of St. *John*, for which we muſt look back to the 57th and following Verſes, where we read, That Elizabeth's

time

time being full come, she was delivered of a Son; upon the News whereof, 'tis said, That *her Neighbours and Cousins came and rejoyced with her*; congratulating the great Mercy had been shew'd to her. Where by the way, we see, that the custom of Neighbours and Friends coming together, and rejoycing at the Birth and Baptism of Infants, is very ancient, and the Practice well-enough warranted, provided it be done with that Modesty, Thankfulness and Moderation that becomes such a christian Solemnity: After which, follows the words of the Text, *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to Circumcise the Child, and called him* Zacharias, *&c.* Where 'tis said, that the Neighbours and Cousins gave the Name, and called him *Zacharias*, after the name of his Father; though that Name was afterward, in an extraordinary way, changed into *John*.

From hence then, we see this ancient Custom of the Sureties giving the Name in Baptism sufficiently warranted; And this will give occasion to treat the more largely concerning this spiritual Relation. To which end, 'twill be requisite to consider the Name or Title of Godfathers and Godmothers here given to them, and why they are so stiled.

Next,

Next, we muſt enquire into the Ground and Reaſon of their Inſtitution; and likewiſe, why the giving the Chriſtian-name is allow'd to them. To which, I ſhall add ſomething,

Touching the Uſefulneſs of this Inſtitution; or the Advantages Children may reap by theſe Sureties; together with

The Duty incumbent on them in that reſpect: after which I ſhall Anſwer an Objection or two, and cloſe up with ſome Application of the whole.

1ſt, Then, Touching the Name of the Preſenters of Children to Baptiſm, we may note, That as this Cuſtom was derived from the Jews, ſo are their Names too: We find thoſe that preſented Infants to be Circumciſed, or the Children of Proſelites to be Baptized, were uſually called their *Fathers*.

Sometimes they are ſtiled Witneſſes to teſtify their Admiſſion, and record their Reception into the Church; ſo they are called, *Iſa.* 8. 2, 3. where we read, That the Propheteſs having brought forth a Son; God Almighty, for ſome weighty Reaſons, appointed

ed the Name, and ordered him to be called *Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz*; and *Uriah* the Prieſt, and *Zachariah*, were appointed as faithful Witneſſes to record it. But becauſe more is required than barely to witneſs or record what is done for them, they are frequently ſtiled *Sponſores*, or *Fidejuſſores*, Sureties or Undertakers, becauſe they publickly engage or undertake for the Infants they preſent to the Font.

But the antient and received Name, from which there is no reaſon to depart, is that of Godfathers and Godmothers, or Fathers and Mothers in God; which ſerve to put them in mind, what Affection they are to bear towards thoſe innocent Babes for God's ſake, and that they take care to bring them up in the fear and knowledge of God, for whoſe religious Education they offer themſelves; and the Church accepts them as Pledges. And it ſavours not a little of the antient Piety, to retain the old accuſtomed Names. From the Name let us proceed to the Thing, and enquire,

2dly, Into the Grounds and Reaſons of this Inſtitution; *i. e.* Why the Church requires, and ſtill continues the Uſe of theſe God-

Godfathers and Godmothers? For which we have

(1.) The Authority of Cuſtom, and the antient Practice both of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church; for when any Children were to be admitted into either, by Circumciſion or Baptiſm, they had always ſome ſelected Perſons to preſent and take care of them; who likewiſe gave them their Name. That this was the Practice of the early Times of Chriſtianity, *Higginus*, and others of the Fathers, plainly declare, and generally all the Reformed Churches, have, and ſtill doe allow the Uſe of Godfathers and Godmothers; and their propounding the Name of the baptized Infant: So that they who decry or neglect this laudable Practice, ſet themſelves againſt the general current of Antiquity, and oppoſe one of the moſt ancient and received Cuſtoms of the Church.

But beſide the Authority of Cuſtom, which ought to ſway much in ſuch Matters, we have many weighty and cogent Reaſons to ground this Cuſtom upon, and warrant this Practice among us. I ſhall mention ſome of them, the better to confirm you in the Reaſonableneſs of this Uſage. As

First

First, No Body or Society whatever, will admit any as Members of it, without engaging to be faithful to it, and obſervant of the Laws of it; for 'tis unreaſonable for any to expect the Benefits and Priviledges of a Society, without promiſing to keep the Rules and Cuſtoms of it. The viſible Church of Chriſt, is a ſpiritual Society of Chriſtians incorporated into one Body, under Chriſt the Head; which Body, as it hath many Priviledges, ſo hath it many Rules and Precepts to live by; and he that will have the one, muſt engage to obſerve the other.

Now Infants being capable of Admiſſion into this Society, as appears by their Initiation by Circumciſion under the Law, and by Baptiſm under the Goſpel; 'tis fit that others ſhould promiſe that for them, which they cannot for themſelves, that they may receive this Benefit, of which, without ſuch an Engagement, they muſt be utterly incapable. 'Tis (you know) a matter of great Conſequence and Advantage, that Children be received, as early as poſſible, into this Chriſtian Society; that ſo if they be taken away in their Infancy or tender Years, they may die in the Church, and depart as the Members

of

of Chriſt's Body; and being entred betimes into this ſacred Community, which is the ordinary way of Salvation, they may be the more ſafe and prepar'd to Live or Die in it. And becauſe Infants cannot make that Engagement in their own Perſons, which is neceſſary to theſe ends, the Mercy of God, and the Charity of the Church, allows this to be done by others in their behalfe; which tends ſoe much to their Security and Advantage.

Again, The very Nature of this Ordinance (as one hath well obſerv'd) requires ſome ſuch Perſons in the ſolemnizing of it; for as Circumciſion was a Covenant of old, whereby the Jews were to keep the whole Law; ſo is Baptiſm a Covenant now, whereby Chriſtians promiſe to obſerve the Goſpel.

Now becauſe Infants cannot promiſe this for themſelves, nor be admitted into Covenant without ſuch an Engagement; the Church very fitly requires and accepts the doing of this by others in their behalf.

Beſides, Faith and Repentance are the neceſſary Terms and Conditions of this Covenant, which becauſe Children cannot perform, they are admitted into it by the Faith of their Parents, and the Promiſes of their Sureties; which *Promiſes, when they come to Age, themſelves are bound to perform.* More-

Moreover, All Nations allow Children Guardians to Contract for them in Temporal Matters; which Contracts being for their Benefit, they are to make good when they come to riper Years: In like manner, the Church allows them Spiritual Guardians to take care of their Souls, and to promise those things in their Name, that are necessary to bring them into a State of Salvation; which is an Office of higher Charity, and grounded upon better Reason than the other; and will be so esteemed by all, that think the Soul of more worth than the Body, and prefer the weightier Matters of Eternity, before the perishing Concerns of this Life.

In short, Children are undone out of the Covenant; into which they have no way to enter, but by the Engagement of these Sureties; for though they want the Grace of Baptism, yet they are unable to exercise or express that Faith and Repentance, which are the necessary Conditions of it: For which reason, the Church, not without the Allowance and Approbation of God, supplys this by others that undertake for them; which shews both the Reason and Use of Godfathers and Godmothers. And this will lead me to consider,

3dly,

3dly, The Usefulness and Benefit of this spiritual Relation, which may be seen in many particulars. As,

(1.) 'Tis very much for the Benefit of Infants, in case of the Parents Death; for so it may, and often does happen, that Parents are taken away in the infancy or minority of their Children; in which case they are left to the wide World; and if they have none to undertake for them, must be abandoned to Ignorance, and all manner of Looseness: Now, is it not much for the Advantage of such Orphans, to have three Persons (at least) solemnly engaged, before God and the Congregation, to look after their Education, and to see them brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?* The Law, we know, allows them Guardians, if the Parents die, to take care of their worldly Goods and Estate; and the Church hath as fitly appointed spiritual Sureties to take care of their Souls, and to mind and promote their spiritual State.

(2.) These Sureties, or Undertakers, are of great Use and Benefit to Children, in case

of the Remisness and Negligence of Parents; for it sometimes may, and too frequently does, come to pass, that Parents are but too unmindful of the Welfare and Education of their Children; some through Inadvertence; others through Poverty; others again through too much Fondness, leaving their Children to their own Will and Ways, whereby they become Headstrong and untractable; and instead of Improving in Virtue, become Proficients only in Vice and Immorality.

Now to prevent these Evils, the Church hath thought fit to joyn others with them, to promote their Welfare and Instruction; requiring these Godfathers and Godmothers to have an Eye and tender Regard of them, to call upon and encourage them to Learn, to quicken Parents in their Duty, and to assist and joyn with them for their spiritual Good and Welfare. And what a great Benefit and Security is it for Children, to have those that, in case of the Death or Negligence of Parents, stand bound thus to take care of them? Who, that considers the Weakness of Children, and the many Dangers they are exposed to, can blame the Prudence of this Custom? Or call in Question, the Usefulness of so charitable and laudable a Practice?

(3.) This

(3.) This is a Means of promoting mutual Love and Kindneſs among Neighbours, by performing this good Office one for another, and concerning themſelves in the Good of each others Children. The Love and good Agreement of Neighbours is ſo much for the Credit of Religion, and the Convenience of Mankind, that 'tis well worth our while to embrace every thing that may tend to beget or encreaſe it. Now, what greater Endearment, or mutual Obligation, can paſs between Neighbours, than this of undertakeing for the Good of one anothers Children, and ſhewing Kindneſs to theſe deareſt Parts and Pledges of themſelves? By this they eſpouſe one anothers Intreſt, and mutually concern themſelves for what is moſt dear to each other; which is one of the ſtrongeſt Bonds of Love and Affection to hold them together. And we cannot but know ſome, who by this ſpiritual Relation of Godfathers and Godmothers to each others Children, have tied ſuch a firm Knot of Love and Friendſhip, that no Time or Accident have been able to unlooſe.

Lastly, This way of Undertaking for the Education of Children, tends not only to the good of private Persons and Families; but is of great Use and Benefit likewise to the Publick; for the well Instructing of Youth, and Training them up in all divine and human Knowledge, conduces much to the Peace and Prosperity of a whole Church and Kingdom. A good Man is a Prop and Pillar of his Country; yea, he is the true *Atlas* that bears up and supports the World: Whereas the idle and profligate Person is the Bane and Burden of the Earth, and lives only upon the Spoils and Ruin of his Country. Now the After-course of Mens Lives, depends much upon the Well-principling and Training them up in the beginning; they that set out well at first, commonly keep on in the Way that they should go: But they that are neglected, or ill Taught in the beginning, seldom act or go aright ever after. So that the well Educating of Children betimes, is a matter of so great Consequence, both to the private and publick Welfare, that we cannot take too great care about it.

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In a word; the Benefit that Infants receive by theſe Undertakers, of being admitted into the Church; the Security they have of being preſerved from Apoſtacy, by theſe Sureties; the good Counſel and Admonitions they have, or ſhould have, from theſe Monitors; the lively Repreſentation of the New-Birth, by the new and ſpiritual Relations of Godfathers and Godmothers; ſhew the Uſe of them in Baptiſm to be a pious, wholeſom and commendable Practice. And this will lead us,

Thirdly, To conſider the Reaſon, why the giving of the Name is uſually committed to theſe ſpiritual Relations, and not to the natural Parents; the Ground whereof may be briefly this. Beſide the natural Birth, we receive from our Parents, by vertue whereof we bear their Name; there is a New-Birth we receive in Baptiſm, by vertue whereof we have a New Name prefix'd to it. Now this latter being derived not from our Parents, but from the Grace and Favour of Chriſt, called therefore the Chriſtian-name; the giving of it fitly belongs to thoſe who undertake for our Chriſtianity, and engage that we ſhall be bred up and live like Chriſtians;

which being confirmed by the Custom and Authority of the Church in all Ages, is abundantly enough to justify the Practice, and satisfy us of the Reasonableness of it.

Thus we see the Antiquity and Usefulness of Godfathers and Godmothers. But because the Use of them hath been impugn'd of late, either through the Ignorance or Negligence of such as take this Office upon them, 'twill be requisite to add something touching the Duty of these Sureties, and to stir them up to a faithful Discharge of it; which shall be done in the next Discourse; in the mean time, from what hath been said, we may infer these Two Things:

1st, The great Goodness of God towards tender Infants, in admitting them so early into Covenant with himself; and because they cannot promise or perform the Condition in their own Persons, he is pleased to admit them upon the Faith of their Parents, and the Engagements of their Sureties. Our Saviour commanded young Children to be brought to him, and blamed those that would have kept them from him; yea, he took them in his Arms, laid his Hands upon them, and

and bleſſed them, declaring that theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven. So that the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, without uttering any thing, ſhew forth his Praiſe; ſince the Mercy that was of old hid from the Wiſe and Prudent, is now extended unto Babes.

2dly, We learn hence the Piety and Charity of our Church, in taking Infants into her Boſom, by the Promiſes of others; and according to our Saviour's Command and Example, receiving them to the Grace and Mercy of the Goſpel.

DISCOURSE V.

Luke 1. 59. *And it came to pass, that on the eighth Day they came to circumcise the Child, and called him* Zacharias, *after the Name of his Father.*

I Have already observed from these Words, the antient and pious Use of Godfathers and Godmothers, who were wont to give the Christian Name to the Infants they brought to Baptism; and likewise to undertake for their Breeding up, and Living answerable thereunto. I proceed now,

To the Duty incumbent on these Godfathers and Godmothers, by Virtue of this Engagement. This is a Matter well worthy to be known and minded; for too many enter upon this Spiritual Relation, meerly out of Custom and Formality, without ever considering the Obligation they take upon themselves thereby, or minding the Duties of it: such Persons will do well, seriously to call to mind the Weight of their Engagement,

ment, or what it is they ſolemnly undertake in the behalf of thoſe Children they preſent to be baptized; what that is, will be more fully explained, when we come to the baptiſmal Vow: in the mean time, we may find the Duty of thoſe Undertakers plainly laid down in the Office of Baptiſm, and more particularly in the Charge given to the Sureties at the end of it; where they are bid,

First, To remember that 'tis their Part and Duty, to ſee that the Infants they engage for, be taught, as ſoon as they ſhall be able to learn, what a ſolemn Vow, Promiſe and Profeſſion, they have made by them. 'Tis impoſſible for Children to keep a Vow, of which they have no Knowledge; and therefore Sureties are to give them to underſtand, what they promiſed for them, and upon what Terms they ſtand with Almighty God: and becauſe the firſt Impreſſions commonly ſink deep and laſt long, therefore they are to begin early with them, and teach them betimes what hath been done for them, and lies upon them to perform. And leaſt theſe things ſhould be forgotten, or juſtled out by other and leſſer Matters, they are often to mind

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and inculcate upon them, these weighty and necessary things. The

Second is, That they call upon them to hear Sermons, and bring them, as soon as possible, to God's House to be farther instructed, *For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. 10. 7. Sermons are appointed to lead them on to greater Perfection, that have been before initiated in the first Principles of Religion. They that frequent them, are commonly built up in their holy Faith; whereas they that neglect them, not only forget their Vow, but fall into Atheism and all manner of Prophaneness. To prevent which, because Sermons will do but little good without laying a good Foundation, therefore Sureties are directed,

Thirdly, To teach them chiefly the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, which comprizing all that is necessary to be believed, to be prayed for and to be done, contain the whole of a Christian's Duty; and being brief Epitomes of each, as they may be easily learnt, so are they carefully to be taught by all that undertake the Education of Children.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The Sureties are directed to call upon the Parents, that the Children they engage for, may be vertuously brought up, to lead a godly and a christian Life. Without this, all other Knowledge or Advantages are vain and useless; and with it, a slender Measure of each, will be available to their Salvation: and therefore it highly concerns these Undertakers, as to discourage Children from doing Evil, so by all good ways to encourage them in Well-doing; and likewise to admonish the Parents, if they find them faulty in either of those ways. Again,

Fifthly, They are bid to remember them of the great End of Baptism, and the Profession made in it; which is to follow the Example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him: That is, to be real Christians, leading holy Lives, and becoming like unto Christ, into whose Name they were baptized, and whose Religion they profess. And that this may be the more effectually done, the Sureties are directed,

Lastly, To bring Children to Confirmation, when they have learnt their Catechism; at which time they solemnly ratify and renew that

that Vow in their own Perſons, which was before made by others in their behalf; and the better to perform it, they are aſſiſted by the Bleſſing and Prayers of the Biſhop, to enable them thereunto. Then, and not 'till then, are the Sureties freed from this Obligation; which ſhould make them as forward and earneſt for the doing of this, as a Surety is to be freed from anothers Debt, for which he ſtands engaged.

But all this (ſay ſome of our Sectaries) may be done by the Parents, none being more concerned in the welfare of their Children, and conſequently none may be ſuppoſed to be more ready and willing to theſe things than they; for which Reaſon they take theſe Godfathers and Godmothers to be a vain and needleſs Inſtitution.

Now the Anſwer to this is eaſy and obvious; for the uſe of Godfathers and Godmothers is not deſigned to exclude the Care and Duty of Parents, but to confirm and add to it: Parents are, by the Laws of God and Nature, bound to take care of the Education of their Children, and to ſeek the good, both of their Souls and Bodies; and there is that natu-

natural Affection commonly planted in them, that prompts them to desire and wish well to both. But yet (as was before observed) Parents are mortal, and may die before their Children are grown up to Years of Understanding; in which case, without some farther care, they may be left helpless and destitute of all Instruction. Again,

2dly- Others may, and have been found, too remiss and negligent in their Duty, to the great hazard of their Children, both as to Soul and Body; and therefore it can be no ways repugnant to Reason or Religion, but very agreeable to both, to have some others joyned with them for their better security, and in these and the like cases, to provide for their Welfare and Instruction. And therefore it is, and always hath been, the pious Wisdom of the Church, to take the best and greatest care it can, of those that are received into it; and least any, by reason of the Mortality or negligence of Parents, should be left void of all the Means of Knowledge, it hath ever thought fit to require Sureties to undertake for them, to provide against the worst; and in all cases, to afford their best Assistance and Encouragement to them.

And

And as a threefold Cord is not easily to be broken, so it may well be presum'd, that between the natural Obligation of Parents, and the voluntary Engagement of at least three Sureties, every baptized Infant may be religiously Educated in the Knowledge of God, and the Means of being Happy; which is so safe, so excellent, and so laudable a Custom, that 'tis to be wondered, how any that tender the good of Children, should have the Face to quarrel at it.

But nothing of this (say they) is performed by these Undertakers, For who is there that regards the educating, instructing, or confirming any they engage for? So that Godfathers and Godmothers are become, rather a Matter of Formality than Use.

In Answer to this, I am sorry, that in our degenerate Age, there should be so much of Truth in this Objection. It must be granted, that the Number of those is few, that enter upon this Office with a due consideration of the Weight and Business of it; or make Conscience of answering the Obligation of it: there are but too many, who take this Trust upon them, meerly out of Complement and Cu-

Cuſtom, who aſſign over the Duty of it to the Parents, and lay aſide all thoughts of the Charge committed by it; theſe are the evil Practices of this licentious Age, which are rather to be lamented, than to be either excuſed or denied.

However, this can be no Argument againſt ſo antient and pious an Inſtitution; the Violation of a Law, may argue indeed, the Badneſs of Mens Lives, but can be no juſt Exception to the Goodneſs of the Law; perhaps there is ſcarce any thing, that tends more to the planting of Holineſs and Vertue in the Minds of Children, than the early Counſel and Inſtructions of theſe Monitors, for hereby they are directed betimes in the way that they ſhould go, and are frequently called upon to go on and keep in it, without turning from it, either to the Right-hand or to the Left; by which means Children may grow in Grace as they do in Years; and Babes in Chriſt may the better arrive to the Fulneſs of the Stature of Men in Chriſt Jeſus.

Now, ſhall ſome Mens neglect bring a diſparagement on ſo wiſe and wholeſome an Inſtitution? Muſt the Abuſe of a good thing take away the Uſe of it? Is it not much better to joyn together to amend and re-

reform this Neglect, than to make it an Argument for laying aside the thing?

In short, The Church hath taken the best care it can to prevent this Evil, by joyning Three, at least, with the Parents, in this Stipulation, that if either of them neglect their Duty, the others may supply the defect; but if all of them should be negligent and unmindful of their Duty, they will hazard, not only the Child's, but their own Souls, and will dearly rue at last, for the Violation of such solemn Engagements.

I shall conclude this Point with a Word or two of Advice to the Parents, the Sureties, and such as have been brought up and Educated by them.

As for Parents, Let me advise them, not only to take all due care of their Children themselves, but likewise to make choice of such Sureties, as are most likely to mind the Duty and discharge the Trust reposed in them; consulting not so much, who will make the largest Presents, as who will most regard the Welfare of their Souls, and be most Assistant to them in their pious Education.

To this end, Kindred and Relations may be fitly enough made choice of, from whom more may be expected than from Strangers; Nature and Blood may prompt them more powerfully to their Duty than others, and lay those sacred Promises more closely upon them.

Again, Such as are nigh in their Abode and Habitation, are to be preferred in our choice, before those that are more remote; for Distance is apt to make Men forget their Charge, or at least renders them more uncapable of performing it; whereas Neighbours and Friends by frequent Sight and Conversation are better minded of it, and more disposed to discharge it.

Moreover, Men of Age and Understanding are to be made choice of on this occasion before Minors; it being a frivolous thing to make one Child engage for another, and to put such whose Bonds are not good in human Courts upon this weighty Office. The Promises made in Baptism are sacred and solemn Things, and therefore to be made only by Persons of mature Age and Judgment, who know the Nature and Obligation of them; and not to be used only as Rattles to please Children, and to be play'd with.

Lastly, Men of a serious and orderly Behaviour, are to be preferred for this Office, before loose and vain Persons; for such are very unlikely to mind others of their Duty, who are too unmindful of their own; and they who shew little or no regard to their own Souls, may not reasonably be trusted with the Souls of others. The Education of Children, and the Engagements entered into about it, are too great and valuable Things to be committed to those, who daily shew how ready they are to break them; and therefore Men of sober Principles and Practices are fittest to be pitch'd upon for this Undertaking; for those will be most sensible of their Duty, and most likely to make Conscience to discharge it. Such as these Parents should make choice of to assist them in this important Charge, to supply their Place in case of Death; or if living, they should fail of their Care and Duty to their Children, they should be willing to hearken to, and amend upon the Admonition of such Supervisors.

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Next, To the Sureties two or three things are neceſſary to be ſpoken.

Firſt, Let none raſhly and inconſiderately enter upon this Office, or take this weighty Truſt only as a formal and cuſtomary Matter; but let them conſider what they do, and what they engage in it; how they enter, as it were, into Bond unto Chriſt and the Church, in the behalf of thoſe whom they preſent to Baptiſm; taking the care of them, and engaging for their performing the Conditions of the Covenant; which are things of too great Moment to be lightly and unadviſedly undertaken. And yet,

Secondly, Chriſtian Friends and Neighbours ſhould not be diſcouraged from this pious Undertaking, by reaſon of the Duty that attends it; for 'tis an Office of Charity, that has been done for us, and we cannot well refuſe it unto others; 'tis an Act of Kindneſs, not only to Infants, by bringing them into the Church, and thereby promoting their Salvation; but likewiſe to the Parents, by aſſiſting in their Education, and thereby promoting the Joy and Comfort they have

in them; nor shall we need to bring any Guilt upon our selves, there being an easy way of delivering our own Souls. To which end, let those that engage in it take care,

Thirdly, To be mindful of their Engagement, and to answer the Obligation of it; let them see that the Children they undertake for learn their Catechism, and be well instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion; let them call upon the Parents, where they see them too backward in the Education of their Children, and let them bring them to the Bishop to be confirmed, and take on themselves the Obligation as soon as they may. By this means they may be the Instruments of their Salvation, and likewise save their own Souls. Let none then take Example from others backwardness to neglect this weighty Care; we find Religion almost lost for want of this religious Education of Children; and nothing can better retrieve it, or repair the decay of christian Piety, than instilling good Principles betimes into them, and fortifying their Youth with early Instructions.

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In the Laſt place, Let all baptized Perſons, as ſoon as they come to Years of Underſtanding, diligently hearken to the good Counſel of their Sureties, taking in good part all their Reproofs; and thankfully receiving all their Admonitions: So will they make a good Uſe of their Godfathers and Godmothers, and reap the Benefit of this pious Inſtitution; ſtill learning and improving by them, and thereby becoming *wiſe unto Salvation.*

DISCOURSE VI.

Luke 1. 59. *And it came to paſs, that on the eighth day they came to Circumciſe the Child, and they called him* Zacharias, *after the name of his Father.*

IN explaining to you the ſecond Queſtion and Anſwer of the Catechiſm, I have ſpoken to the

Firſt thing contained in it, *viz.* The Parties that give the Chriſtian-name, which we are there told are our Godfathers and Godmothers; where we have enquired into the Antiquity, the Reaſon and Uſefulneſs of that ſpiritual Relation; together with the Duties incumbent on all ſuch as enter into it. I proceed now to the

Second thing contained in this Queſtion and Anſwer, and that is, The Time of giving the Chriſtian-name; which our Text tells us, was at the Circumciſing of Children;

dren; our Catechiſm ſuitable to it, at the Baptizing of them, which ſucceeded in the room of the former. Where we find our Church, according to the Direction of the Holy Scripture, takes particular Notice of the Time and Seaſon of this memorable Action: And therefore in ſpeaking to it, I muſt obſerve,

I. The Solemnity that hath been ever uſed at the giving of Names.

II. That Circumciſion under the Law, and Baptiſm under the Goſpel, have been the uſual Times of giving the Chriſtian-name.

III. I muſt enquire into the Reaſon, why theſe Times were chiefly made choice of for this purpoſe. For the

Firſt, We find all Nations have been ever careful of giving Names to their Children; partly for Diſtinction, that one Perſon might be known and diſtinguiſhed from another; partly for Inſtruction, that Children bearing the Name of great and worthy Perſons, might be thereby ſtirred up to Imitation;

tation; and partly likewiſe to preſerve the Memory of their Anceſtors, who by deriving down their Names to Poſterity, do in a manner ſurvive themſelves, and obtain a ſort of Immortality. Hence we read, That the moſt barbarous Nations have obſerved this Practice of giving their Names to their Children, the better to continue their Memory, and to live in their Poſterity. And all civilized Countries have been more eſpecially careful of it, knowing that though Children are liſted in the Number of Mankind, by their common Nature; yet they cannot enter into their Society and Commerce without a Name; for though their Birth may make them Men, yet 'tis their Baptiſm only that makes them Chriſtians. And therefore in all religious Nations the giving of Names hath been ever done with great Solemnity; ſome have ſet apart ſome certain Days, as the Seventh, Eighth, or Tenth, according to their particular Cuſtoms, for the more ſolemn Performance hereof. The Jews did it on the Eighth Day, which was the Day of Circumciſion, as appears by our Text, *It came to paſs, that on the eighth day they Circumciſed the Child, and called him* Zach. *&c.* The Grecians were wont to offer

offer Sacrifice at the giving of the Name, to make it the more lucky and proſperous; and this is done, not without Solemnity among us to this Day.

But what have been the uſual Times of giving Children their Names? This our

Second particular will inform us, namely, the Day of Circumciſion under the Law, and the Day of Baptiſm under the Goſpel, which you know continues with us to this Day. That the Jews named the Child at Circumciſion, the Holy Scriptures, as well as the Jewiſh Writers, expreſly tell us. We read in *Gen.* 21. 3, 4. *That* Abraham *Circumciſed his Son the eighth day; and called his Name* Iſaac. The ſame is affirmed here of St. *John*; yea, we find our bleſſed Saviour, being made under the Law, in compliance with it, was Circumciſed the eighth day; and had his Name called *Jeſus*, *Luke* 2. 21.

But though our Saviour changed this painful Rite of Circumciſion, into the more eaſy one of Baptiſm; yet he made no Alteration as to the Time and Cuſtom of giving the Name; but left that to continue under the new, as it was under the old Diſpenſation. Accordingly we find this time aſſigned and

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uſed to this purpoſe ever ſince, the Chriſtians ſtill naming their Children at their Baptiſm, as the Jews were wont to do of old at their Circumciſion. And becauſe the Name hath been ſince changed, and all other Appellations ſwallow'd up, and buried in the common Name of Chriſtian, ſome have ſuppoſed ſome great Myſtery in it; and that our Saviour alluded herein to that new Name, which he promiſed to give his Servants, *Rev.* 2. 17.

However that be, 'tis moſt certain, that the Cuſtom of Impoſing the Chriſtian-name at the time of Baptiſm, hath continued in all Ages of the Chriſtian Church ever ſince; yea, we find that Perſons baptized in their riper Years, have changed their Name at Baptiſm, from what they had before: As *Saul* did at his Baptiſm into *Paul*, *Acts* 13. 9. And the ſame may be ſhewed in many other Inſtances; eſpecially where the Names were taken from Idols or falſe Gods, it being forbidden by Councils (as a learned Man hath obſerved) to give the Children of Chriſtians any Heathen Names; requiring them likewiſe to impoſe only the Names of the Apoſtles, or other eminent Saints, which they were to wear, not barely as Ornaments, but

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as Encouragements to follow the ſteps of their Examples; or if we bear a Name that hath not been yet Exemplary, we endeavour to make it ſo by our holy Lives and Actions. And this will lead me to the

Third thing propounded to be ſpoken to, which was to enquire into the reaſon, why the Chriſtian-name hath been thus ſolemnly given at our Baptiſm; for which theſe two Reaſons may be given.

1ſt, Becauſe that it is the time when we ſolemnly enter upon Chriſtianity, and therefore is the fitteſt time to receive the Chriſtian-name; for this being a Badge that we belong to Chriſt, we cannot more properly take it upon us, than when we are liſted under his Banner. We bring one Name into the World with us, which we derive from our Parents, and that ſerves to mind us of our Original Guilt, and that we are born in Sin: But this new Name we fitly receive at our Regeneration in Baptiſm, to mind us of our new Birth, when old things paſs away, and all things become new. So that this new Name is deſigned to repreſent our new Nature, when being waſhed in the Laver of

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Regeneration, and thereby cleansed from our natural Impurities, we become, in a manner, new Creatures, and solemnly dedicate our selves unto God.

We find something like this even among the Heathens. The Romans had a Custom of Washing and Cleansing of Infants from their natural Pollution, which they call'd the Day of Lustration; at which time they were wont to give them their Names, call'd therefore *Dies Nominalis*. The Grecians had a Custom of carrying Infants, a little after their Birth, about the Fire; which was undoubtedly a Ceremony of Consecrating them to their Houshold Gods; *And this* (as *Hesychius* tells us) *was the time of their imposing Names upon them.*

So that the naming of Children at this time, hath been thought, by many, to import something more than ordinary, and to carry with it a mysterious Signification.

Again 2dly, The time of Circumcision of old, and of Baptism since, hath been fitly made use of for this purpose, because of the Company that commonly attend those Solemnities, who thereby become Witnesses of the Child's Reception into the Church, and

likewiſe of the Name then given to it, if any after Doubt ſhould ariſe about it. Moreover, their beholding the Miniſter, after Chriſt's Example, taking the Child into his Arms, and ſolemnly, before the Congregation, giving it a Chriſtian-name, may admoniſh all that are preſent of their Baptiſm, and call to mind, that they received their Name and Chriſtianity together.

Laſtly, The receiving our Name at Baptiſm, may ſerve to ſignify, that we then begin to be ſome-body, when we are conſecrated unto God; for before that, we are *Nullius Nominis*, Perſons of no Account, and not worthy of a Name. 'Tis our Dedication unto God by Baptiſm, that entitles us to a Chriſtian-name; and our entrance into the Church, that inrolls us in the number of Chriſt's Followers. In ſhort,

Except we be Born again of Water and the Holy Ghoſt, it had been better for us not to have been Born at all. And becauſe we date our Chriſtianity from this new Birth, 'tis fit that from thence we derive our Chriſtian-name, which is the outward Badge and Cognizance of it.

I shall shut up this Point with a Lesson or two to be learn'd from it.

And (1.) we may learn from hence, what a Value we ought to have for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, at which time we have our new Birth, and receive a new Name to represent it. Without this, we are in the State of Infidels, *without Christ, aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise; having no hope, and without God in the World*, as the Apostle describes the Misery of our natural State, *Eph.* 2. 12. In this forlorn condition, we are unworthy of the Christian-name, till we who by Nature are far off, are by Baptism brought nigh, and engrafted into Christ.

The Name we receive from our natural Parents, is the mark of the Guilt and Shame we derive from them. 'Tis the Christian-name that inrolls us in the Register of the Church, and is alone written in the Book of Life. And this shews us the high Esteem we are to have of this sacred Rite of Baptism, by which alone we begin to be somebody in God's Account, and are listed into the number of his People.

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Memorable to this purpose is the Story we find mentioned in the Life of *Lewis* the IX of *France*, for his Piety call'd St. *Lewis*; who being ask'd, *By what Title he would be signalized to Posterity after his Death?* Answered, *By* Lewis *of* Poisy. And being told, *That that was an obscure Place, and not fit to adorn the Character of so great and so good a Prince*; Answered again, Lewis *of* Poisy: And being farther told, *That there were other Places, which he had signalized by his Valour, and made renowned by the Victories he had obtained in them*: Answered still, *That he would be remembered by* Lewis *of* Poisy, *because there he obtained the greatest Victory he ever had, even that over the Devil.* Meaning, That he was Christen'd there. By which we see what a high Esteem he had of his Baptism; how he valued no Name like that of a Christian; and no Place like to that where he received it.

Lastly, The new Name we receive in Baptism, should put us in mind of leading a new Life. This is the Sense of the Apostle in those words, *We are buried with Christ in Baptism, that like as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also*

should

should walk in newness of Life, Rom. 6. 4. Where the rising out of the Waters of Baptism, into which they were antiently plunged, represents the rising again from the Dead. And the washing off the Impurities of the Flesh, by that means, represents that newness or purity of Life, they were obliged to ever after. *As many as are baptized into Christ* (saith the same Apostle) *have put on Christ*; that is, they have taken his Name upon them, in token of a new Nature they receive from him, and therefore they are not to put it off again, or to walk unworthy of it.

We read of an ancient Custom among the Romans, To write the Soldier's Name upon his Shield, to signify that his Honour was engaged to keep it, and that he could not part with one, without the loss of the other. In like manner, our blessed Saviour hath so ordered it, that we receive our Name and our Faith together; by which we stand obliged to preserve both, and may not without eternal Infamy shrink or depart from either. 'Twas a smart Rebuke that was given to a Coward, who bore the Name of *Alexander*, *Vel mutes nomen Alexandri vel fortiter pugnes*, either change thy Name, or shew thy Valour, that

that the renowned Name of *Alexander* be not dishonoured by thy Cowardise. The same *Item* may be given to all that are called Christians, Either quit that sacred Name, or live answerable to it, that so honourable a Title be not disparaged by an unsuitable Conversation.

Let us then often call to mind this sacred Name that is called upon us; and by it remember that we are Christians, that we may not do any thing unbecoming so noble a Title; let it serve as a Spell or a Charm to drive away the Devil from us, or as a Shield to repel all the fiery Darts of the Wicked. We read of a holy Virgin that conquered all the Temptations of the Devil, by saying these words, *I am Baptized, I am a Christian*, when ever she was assaulted by them. And, indeed, the frequent and serious Consideration of these Things would mightily help to arm us against the strongest Temptations.

Thus I have considered all that is necessary to be known, touching the Time of giving the Christian-name which is in our Baptism.

The next thing is concerning the Benefits and Priviledges conferred in it in those words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* Of which hereafter.

DIS-

DISCOURSE VII.

Ephes. 5. 30. *We are Members of his Body.*

WE are yet upon the Second Question and Answer in the Catechism, in explaining whereof, I have spoken,

First, To the Parties that give the Christian-name, *viz. Our Godfathers and Godmothers*; together with the Antiquity and Use of them.

Secondly, To the Time of giving the Christian-name, *viz. In our Baptism*; together with the Ground and Reasons of this ancient Practice. I proceed now to the

Third thing to be spoken in it, and that is the Benefits and Priviledges, conveyed by and conferred in, our Baptism, contained in these words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And this will lead me to consider Baptism as a Covenant, made between God and Man, which (as all other Leagues and Covenants) hath Promises and Conditions annexed to it.

The Mercies and Blessings promised on God's part, are those before recited, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ*, &c.

The Duties and Conditions to be performed on Man's part, are rehearsed in the following Question and Answer, where the Baptized Party engages *to renounce the Devil*, &c.

I begin, as our Catechism directs us,

I. With the Mercies and Blessings promised on God's part, and they are these three; (1.) *To be made a Member of Christ.* (2.) *A Child of God.* *And* (3.) *an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* All which are very noble and invaluable Priviledges, as will appear by a particular Explication of them: Accordingly I shall speak to the

First of them at this time, from these words of the Apostle, *We are Members of his Body.*

Body. For the better understanding whereof, I must enquire, What is meant by the Body of Christ; What by being a Member of this Body; and What are the Benefits and Priviledges that appertain to, and are conveyed by it. For the

1st, By the Body of Christ, we are to understand the Christian Church, which is frequently in Scripture stiled the Body of Christ, *Rom.* 12. 4, 5. Yea, sometimes it is stiled Christ himself, as 1 *Cor.* 12. 13, 14. As the Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of it being many are one Body; so also is Christ; that is, so is the Christian Church.

Now this Christian Church is a Spiritual Society of all Christian People; called out of the World, and united unto Christ as the Head, and to one another as the Members. Which Description of the Church, because 'tis a matter so necessary to be known, I shall endeavour to explain, and bring down to the meanest Capacities. I call it then,

(1.) A *Society*, to distinguish it from a confused Multitude, that hath no Order or Subordination of Parts; whereas a Church is a

Regular Society, consisting of Superiors to Teach and Govern, and Inferiors to be taught and governed by them.

Again (2.) I call it a *Spiritual Society*, to distinguish it from political Bodies and Corporations, made by human Authority and Compact; whereas the Church is a Body made and animated by a divine Spirit. Again,

(3.) I call it a Spiritual Society consisting of *all Christian People all the World over*, to distinguish it from the Jewish Church, which was confined only to one Nation; the Jews being then the peculiar People of God, having a Partition-wall to separate them from others; for *to them only appertained the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenant, and the giving of the Law and the Promises*, Rom. 9. 3, 4. But now that enclosure is taken down by the Accession of the Gentiles; *For Christ is our peace*, saith the Apostle, *and hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us*, Eph. 2. 14.

So that the Christian Church is now no longer confined to one particular Place or Nation; but is become Catholick and Universal,

and

and spread over the Face of the whole Earth; insomuch, that *in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts 10. 35. Moreover,

(4.) I stile it a Society of Christian People, *called out of the World*, to distinguish it from the Synagogue of Satan, and to separate Christ's Flock from the unsanctified Herd of reprobate and wicked Men; for the Church is a select Body of People, called out and separated from the prophane part of the world, to be *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

St. *Paul* tells us of the Christians, that they are called out of the World to a holy Profession or Calling, *Eph.* 4. 3. 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. and therefore in many places of Scripture, they are stiled the *Called*. And our Saviour declares of them, *That though they are in the World, yet they are not of the World, but are called or taken out of it*, John 17. 6, 11, 16. Again,

(5.) I stile it a Society of Christians call'd out of the World, and *united unto Christ as the Head*; where by being united, 'tis distinguished from an Aggregate Body, or con-

fused Heap, that hath no Union or Connexion of Parts but lie loose and disjoyned from one another; whereas the Church is a compact Body, *knit together by that which every Joynt supplys*, Eph. 4. 16. And therefore we find it often compared to a House, a Building, a Temple, where all the Parts are cemented and joyned together. And this Union is said to be first and chiefly to Christ, as the Head, from whence they derive all spiritual Strength and Grace; for as in the natural Body, the Head is the Fountain of Life and Spirit, from whence 'tis derived into the other parts; so from Christ the mystical Head of the Church, all the Body, by joynts and bands, having Nourishment ministered, increaseth with the Increase of God, *Col.* 2. 19.

Lastly, I stile it a Society of Christians, not only united to Christ, as the Head, but to *one another as the Members*; and by this the Church of Christ is distinguished from the Conventicles of Sectaries, which are all divided and disjointed from one another Whereas the Members of Christ's mystical Body, are joined together by one Communion and Fellowship, which are as it were the Nerves and Sinews to keep them

them together; *For we being many* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *are all but one Bread*, that is, one Communion nouriſhed by the ſame ſpiritual Food, eating the ſame ſpiritual Meat, and drinking all of the ſame ſpiritual Cup; *for the Bread that we break* (as he goes on) *is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? and the Cup that we drink of, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt?* And being all partakers of both, all the Members are joyned together in the ſame Fellowſhip and Communion, which is the cement that unites and keeps them together.

So that this Body is but one, acted by the ſame Spirit, called into one Hope of their Calling, having the ſame Lord; *i. e.* The ſame Head or Maſter to preſide over it, the ſame Faith profeſſed in it, but one Baptiſm to enter into it, and but one God and Father of all to continue and preſerve it; as we read *Epheſ.* 4. 4, 5, 6.

Thus we ſee, what we are to underſtand by the body of Chriſt, namely, the whole Chriſtian Church; which though ſubdivided into many particular Churches and Congregations for the convenience of Worſhip and Diſcipline, are yet all united into one Body, or Catholick Church, under Chriſt their Head,

Head, and joined to one another as Members by one Communion. From whence I proceed,

2dly, To enquire what it is to be a Member of this Body? Which, in short, is to be admitted into this Society of Christians, and to the Enjoyment of all the Benefits and Priviledges of it. And this is done by the Sacrament of Baptism, by which we are received into the bosom of the Church, and ingrafted into this one body of Christ; hence we are said *to be baptized into Christ*; that is, by Baptism admitted into the Christian Church: *And as many* (saith the Apostle) *as have been thus baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; that is, have put on that Relation unto Christ, that Members have to the Body. For this reason, Baptism is sometimes stiled *The Door that opens into the Christian Church*; sometimes, *The Gate that leads us into Christ's Fold*; more frequently, *The beginning of a New and Christian Life*; and *The first step to Fellowship with God and his Saints*. And this was the Reason, why the Font was anciently placed by the Door or Entrance into the Church; to signify that by that we are admitted into the Congregation of Christ's Flock.

Flock. And the Fonts being put in the way to the Altar, ſignifys Baptiſms being the firſt ſtep to the holy Place, and being thereby taken into the number of God's Children, we may be emboldened to go on, and draw nigh to his holy Table: *For by one Spirit*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *we are baptized into one Body, and are made to drink of the ſame Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 14. meaning, that being thus entered into it, we are intituled to the Holy Ordinances of the Goſpel, and being made Members of Chriſt, that is of his Church, we are thereby inſtated in all the Promiſes and Priviledges that belong to it. And this will lead us to enquire,

3dly, What are thoſe Favours and Priviledges that appertain to us as Members of Chriſt's Church. And though theſe are many and great, yet I ſhall mention two only as common to all the viſible Members of it. And theſe are,

(1.) The Liberty of God's holy Word and Sacraments; together with all other means of Grace, in order to a holy Life.

And

And (2.) The divine Aids and Assistances of God's Grace and holy Spirit, in order to render them useful and effectual to that end. Of each of which I must speak a word or two particularly; and,

First, All the Members of Christ's Church, as such, have a right to the hearing and reading of God's Word, and receiving his holy Sacraments, together with all other means of a holy Life, of which nothing but their own Counsel and stubborn Refusal can deprive them. For Christ's Commission to his Apostles, and in them to all other Pastors and Ministers of his Church, was, *Go teach all Nations, baptizing them*, &c. Mat. 28. 19. And tho' they were sent first only to the *lost Sheep of the House of* Israel, yet their Commission was after enlarged, and extended to the Gentiles also, and *to as many as the Lord our God should call*; so that no baptized Christian now is to be excluded from the publick Assemblies and Instructions of the Church, that is willing to learn, nor to be debarred of the holy Sacrament, that does not unfit himself to receive them.

Now

Now this, considering the Excellency of the divine Law, and how far the Doctrine of the Gospel exceeds all other Pretences to Revelation, will be found a vast and inestimable Priviledge. The Precepts of Christ infinitely surpass, not only the wisest Instructions of the Heathen Moralists, but even the more sacred Institutions of *Moses*'s Law: And tho' no Nation had wiser and better Laws than the Jews, yet the Precepts of Christ as far exceed them, as the Light of the Sun does that of the Stars. And what a Happiness is it to be under the Influence and Conduct of such bright Revelations? And, as Christ hath set up this clear Light in his Church, so hath he caused it to shine to all the Members of it; the Word and Sacraments being free to all that desire to have access to them; and none but such as wilfully cut off themselves, are to be excluded from the benefit of his Institutions. But then,

Secondly, Another and greater Priviledge than this, belonging to the Members of Christ's Church, and that is, not only freely to enjoy the Means of Grace for the good of their Souls, but to derive Grace and Strength from

from Christ, to render them effectual to their Salvation; for as the Head conveys down Life, and Sense, and Motion, to the inferiour Members, so does Christ derive down the Assistance of his Grace and holy Spirit upon the Members of his Body, by which they are quickened and enabled to every good Word and Work. And this is done partly by our Union with Christ, the Head of the Catholick Church; partly by our Union and Subordination to the lawful Governours and Teachers of it; and partly likewise by our Union with one another: For as in the natural Body there are Nerves that branch from the Head through the Body, and convey the animal Spirits to every Member; so in the mystical Body of the Church, there are the Ordinances of the Sacraments of Preaching and Praying, and other holy Offices, administred by Persons set apart for that purpose, to convey those ordinary supplies of Grace, that are necessary to the Health and Vigour of every Part. By which means it is, that the Grace of God is sufficient for us, and we can do all things required and expected from us through Christ that strengthens us. These are some of the inestimable Priviledges that belong to us, as we are by Baptism made the Mem-

Members of Christ. From whence we may infer,

1st, The unspeakable danger of obstinate and scandalous Wickedness, which justly forfeits these Priviledges, and causes Men to be deprived of them. Our blessed Saviour hath left a Power in his Church, by Excommunication to cut off obstinate Offenders from the Benefit and Blessings of it; he hath ordered, that such as will not hearken to the Church, or be subject to the Power he hath set up in it, be no longer accounted Christians, but as Heathens and Publicans. St. *Paul* commanded the incestuous Corinthian to be delivered up to Satan, and to put from among them that wicked Person.

Now, as 'tis a singular Favour to be received within the Pales of the Church, and to enjoy the forementioned Mercies and Priviledges of it, so 'tis an unspeakable Misery to be turned out, and to be barred of the forecited Blessings. And the rather, because they who are justly shut out now from the Church Militant, will be excluded likewise from the Church Triumphant hereafter; and the Sentence pronounced against them here

here on Earth, will be then ratified in Heaven.

2dly, We may infer from hence, the extream folly and danger of Schism, whereby Men voluntarily cut themselves off from the Body of Christ, by their own wilful and causeless Separation; and fall into those Sects and Divisions, which are not so much Parts of the Church, as the Excrescences and Corruptions of it. The Sin of Schism lies in breaking the Unity of the Church, and thereby dividing the one Body of Christ. The folly of it lies in falling off from the one Communion of the Church, and thereby depriving our selves of the Promises and Blessings annexed to it. The danger of it is, That by both these we cut our selves off from Christ, and shut our selves out of all hopes of Mercy and Salvation from him. *I am the Vine* (saith Christ) *ye are the Branches; except ye abide in me*, that is, *in my Church, ye can bear no Fruit; but like withered Branches, are only fit to be cut down and cast into the Fire.*

Lastly, From what hath been said, let us learn to set a high Value upon this Church-Membership, which we have by our Baptism, and

and the ineſtimable Priviledges we receive thereby; endeavouring to make a right Uſe of them, by frequenting the publick Aſſemblies, and receiving the holy Sacraments; which not only tend to the preſent comfort and edification of our Souls; but to the future and eternal happineſs and ſalvation of them.

Let none ſlight theſe invaluable Bleſſings, by neglecting or contemning the publick Worſhip, or turning their backs upon God's holy Ordinances; for this is to make light of Chriſt; to thruſt Salvation from them; and to incur the Peril of eternal Damnation.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And Verse 16th, *We are the Children of God.*

HAVING Explained the first Privi-ledge conferred in Baptism, namely, Church-Membership, contained in those Words, *Wherein I was made a Member of Christ*, I come now to the

Second, in those Words, *Wherein I was made a Child of God*; of which I shall discourse to you from these Words of the Apostle, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons or Children of God.* To be led by the Spirit of God, is, among other ways, to be led to the Waters of Baptism, where we are said to be born again, *of Water and the Holy Ghost*, John 3. And as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, the Apostle tells us, *are the Sons of God*, or, as the Catechism expresses it, *the Children of God.* For

the

the better explaining whereof, I must enquire,

First, What we are to understand here by *a Son or Child of God.*

Secondly, What are the Benefits or Priviledges of this Relation; and,

Thirdly, I must shew that this is promised and conveyed to us in Baptism; of which particularly. And,

1st, I must explain what is here meant by *a Son or Child of God.* In order to which, we may observe,

First, That to be a Son of God here, cannot be meant of a Son by eternal Generation; for this was the sole Priviledge of Jesus Christ, and peculiar to him; who is therefore in this Sense said to be *the only Son*, or, *the only begotten Son of God.* Nor yet,

Secondly, Are we to understand by it, *a Son of God by Creation*; for in this Sense, the Angels and all Mankind, even those without as well as within the Church, are the Sons

of God; What then must this Title or Appellation of a Child of God mean? Why, there is a double Sense in which we are said by Baptism to *be made the Children of God*; namely, by spiritual Regeneration and Adoption, both which are invaluable Favours and Blessings; and being both implied here in our Catechism, must be particularly spoken to.

1st, We are in Baptism made the Children of God by spiritual Regeneration; this St. *John* expresses, *by being born again of Water and the Holy Ghost*; St. *Peter*, *by being begotten again to a lively Hope*. By our natural Generation we are born in Sin, and thereby the Children of Wrath; but by Baptism we are regenerated or born again, and are thereby made the Children of Grace. By this new Birth old things pass away, and all things become new; the original Guilt and Pollution we derive from our first Parents, are washed away in the Waters of *Baptism*, and we are thereby cleansed and purified into new Creatures. This St. *Paul* told the Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. where, after he had reckoned up the vilest of Sinners and the corruption of our natural State, *Such* (saith he) *were some of you, but ye are washed and sanctified*

ſanctified by the Name of Chriſt and the Holy Spirit; meaning, That they were cleanſed by Baptiſm from their natural Impurities: and elſewhere, we are ſaid to have *our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, and our Bodies waſhed with pure Water*; by this new Birth we are here ſaid to be made the Children of God. This is the frequent Language of the Holy Scriptures, where Baptiſm is declared the Inſtrument of our new Birth, and the Font the *Laver of Regeneration*. This was likewiſe the Doctrine of the primitive Fathers and Councils, tho' ſome modern Syſtems have taught otherwiſe, and miſled unwary Perſons in this point.

2dly, We are herein made the Children of God by Adoption and Grace, by which we are taught and enabled to cry *Abba Father*, for ſo the Apoſtle tells us, *Gal.* 4. 6. Being thus made Sons, *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying Abba Father*; and *Rom.* 8. 15. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry Abba Father.* Now Adoption (you know) is the receiving or engrafting a Stranger into anothers Stock or Family, and allowing him

all the Favours and Priviledges of a natural-born Child. And this is commonly upon the Death or Defect of natural Issue; of which many Instances may be given in all Ages and Countries. In like manner God Almighty vouchsafes to admit us that were Strangers into his Family, and to call us to the Adoption of Sons; and that not to supply the defect, but to encrease the number of his Children. The Jews before were the only People or Children of God, *Deut.* 14. 1, 2. For *to them appertained the Adoption, the Covenant, the giving of the Law and the Promises*, Rom. 9. 3, 4. But God hath now enlarged his Family by receiving the Gentiles into it, and adopting them to the Priviledges of Sons; for so saith St. *John*, *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Children of God*, John 1. 12. by which means, we that were afar off, *Aliens from the Common-wealth of* Israel, *and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, are now made nigh by the Blood of Christ*; and from Strangers and Foreigners, are become *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God*, Eph. 2. 12, 13, 19. And all this not for any Merit or Entreaty of ours, but meerly of his own free Grace and good Will, having *predestinated us*

to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will; accepting us in his Beloved, to the *Praise and Glory of his Grace*, Eph 1. 5, 6.

In short, We are the Children of God by our new Birth, and a certain Covenant-Relation contracted thereupon; for God hath thereby entered into a new Covenant with us, in which he hath promised to be *to us a God*, and we are to be *to him a People*; and elsewhere, that he will be to us a *Father*, and we are to be to him as *Sons*; which is a signal and unexpressible Favour. And this will lead us,

Secondly, To consider the many and great Benefits and Priviledges contained in, and conveyed by this Relation; for as we are the Children of God, we are intituled to many rich and precious Promises, and invested into many great and glorious Priviledges: I shall mention some of them.

And 1st, As Children of God, we receive the Remission of Sins: Our original Sin is done away in Baptism, and washed off in the Laver of Regeneration; so that for Infants dying before the Commission of any

actual Transgression, there can be no reason to doubt of their Salvation; and for all actual Sins committed after, we are secured of a Pardon, upon sincere and hearty Repentance: this is a Priviledge that belongs to all within the Covenant, of which they that are out of the Church have no share. St. *Paul* plainly specifies this as a Priviledge of the adopted Sons and Children of God, telling us, that such have by Redemption in Christ, *the forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace*, Eph. 1. 3, 4, 7. and the Nicene Creed teaches us to *believe one Baptism for the remission of Sins*. Again,

2dly, By this new Relation of Sonship, we are secured from the Rigour of the first Covenant; for that exacted a perfect and unsinning Obedience, and pronounced a Curse on every one that continued not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them: whereas our indulgent Father now considers our Infirmities, accepts our good Will, where our Endeavours are not wanting, and will not withdraw his Kindness and Affection for any involuntary Miscarriages, *Like as a Father pitieth his own Children* (saith holy *David*) *even so the Lord pitieth them that fear*

fear him, Pſal. 103. 13. The Prophet *Malachy* brings in God Almighty, declaring, *That he will remember them in the day that he maketh up his Jewels, and will ſpare them, as a Man ſpareth his own Son, that ſerveth him*, Mal. 3. 17. which is a Mercy extended only to his own Children.

Thirdly, As we are the Children of God, we are intituled to his peculiar Care and Protection; for if earthly Parents *know how to give good Gifts to their Children, How much more will our heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them*, Mat. 7. 11.

God Almighty indeed exerciſeth a general Providence over all his Creatures, whereby, like the ſupreme Lord of the Univerſe, he makes Proviſion for the whole Family of Heaven and Earth: but he hath a more eſpecial care of the Houſhold of Faith, and bears a more tender regard to his own Children; he that touches theſe, toucheth the Apple of his Eye: And, *Who ſhall harm you* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *if you are followers of that which is good?* 1 Pet. 3. 13. *The Lions may lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord, ſhall want nothing that is good*, Pſal. 34. 10. He may indeed find it neceſſary ſometimes to

correct

correct his own Children, as a Father chasteneth a Son whom he loveth; but this is always for their good, to prevent their Wandrings, and make them more sensible of their Duty and Dependence on him.

In a word; God is pleased so to order Matters for them, that all things shall *work together for good to them that love him, who are the Called according to his purpose*, Rom. 8. 28. He takes this Course only to quicken their Grace, and to fit them for Glory, which is an Instance of the tender Love and Care he bears towards them as his own Children.

Fourthly, As we are the Children of God, we may have the freer access to him, and come with greater boldness to the Throne of Grace, for help in time of need. A Child, you know, may go freely to his Father for the supply of his Wants, and may ask, with confidence, what is necessary and convenient for him. In like manner, we may address with boldness to our heavenly Father, in all our Exigencies, who is still ready to hear and help us, when we call upon him; being adopted into his Family, we are part of his Care, and may freely acquaint him with all our Necessities. The Jews addressed to God rather as Servants

vants than Sons, and accordingly worshipped him in a servile manner; if they had offended, they were to bring their Sacrifice to the Priest, who was to offer it for them, whil'st they stood at a distance: But we have *a new and living way consecrated for us through the blood of Jesus, by which we may enter freely into the holy place; and having such a high Priest over the house of God, we may henceforward draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb. 10. 19, 20, &c. Hence the Apostle declares, *That we have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15. meaning, that being no longer Servants, but Children, we may have free access: And if we come with the Duty of Sons, we cannot miss of the Bowels of a Father. And is not this a high and inestimable Priviledge, to have the Liberty of approaching the Divine Majesty upon all Occasions, and to have our Requests so easily heard and answered in the Court of Heaven?

Certainly, this cannot but be thought so, by all that are sensible of their Wants, and their own Inability to supply them.

Lastly,

Lastly, As the Children of God, we are intituled to a glorious Inheritance in Heaven. The Inheritance of the Father, we know, is by Birth entailed upon the Son; *and if Children*, saith the Apostle, *then Heirs*. But this must be discoursed of under the next Head, wherein we are said to be *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; and therefore must be referred thither.

These are some of the many invaluable Benefits and Priviledges, that appertain to us as the Children of God: All which are promised and consigned over to us in our Baptism; which is one of the Seals of the New Covenant: And that sacred Rite by which we are instated in the Priviledges of the Gospel, and the Liberties of the Sons of God.

From this Discourse then, we may learn

1st, To Admire and Adore the infinite Goodness of God in admitting us thus into his Family, and receiving us in so near and dear a Relation to himself. St. *John*, like one astonished at the thoughts of it, crys out, *Behold! What manner of Love is this, that the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called*

called the Sons of God! 1 John 3. 1. And St. *Paul*, like one in a rapture, breaks forth, *O! the heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth of this Love of God that passeth knowledge!* Eph. 3. 18. Where the Apostle, in taking the Dimensions of the Divine Love, soon found himself at a loss, and was wholly swallowed up in Amazement and Admiration. Indeed, that we who were not only Aliens, but Enemies, should receive the Adoption of Sons; and from Out-casts and Rebels be taken into his Bosom, and made the Darlings of his Care and Affections, is a Mercy too big for Words, and 'tis to be expressed only with Extasy and Wonder.

Moreover, we learn hence, what infinite reason we have to praise God for such a signal Instance of his Goodness, in taking us for his Children, and reckoning us in the number of his Sons; what can we do less than, upon all Occasions, magnify and extol such his infinite Condescension and Kindness? And likewise, with all possible Thankfulness, acknowledge our unspeakable Priviledge and Dignity therein? This St. *Paul* teaches all Christians to do, *Eph.* 1. 3, 5. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly*

venly Places in Christ Jesus, having predestinated us in him to the Adoption of Children.

Lastly, This vast Priviledge of being made the Sons and Children of God, should teach us to live worthy of, and suitable to, so high and noble a Relation.

The first and great Duty of a Child, is to love his Parents with a filial Affection; *we have had Fathers in the flesh*, saith the Apostle, *and we loved them and gave them reverence.* This then, in the highest degree, is to be given to our heavenly Father, *loving him with all our heart, and with all*, &c.

Again, *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master: if I then be a Father, where is my Honour? If a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts*, Mal. 1. 6. This Relation then must engage us to study and live to his Honour; *and whether we eat or drink, to do all to the praise and glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. This is no more than he expects and challenges from us.

Moreover, Children, you know, are to obey their Parents, to hearken to their Counsel, and kindly to receive their Admonitions and

and Corrections, and to amend upon them. This Obedience is in the higheſt meaſure to be paid to our Father in Heaven; for his Commandments are never grievous, and his Corrections are always for our good.

Laſtly, Children are wont to truſt and rely upon their Parents, to depend upon their Care and Proviſion for them; this we ſhould do in a more eminent manner upon our heavenly Father, caſting our care upon Him, who careth for us, and relying upon his Providence without anxiety and diſtruſt. This Leſſon our Saviour teaches, *Matth. 6.* where he wills us, Not to be ſollicitous about Food and Rayment, becauſe our heavenly Father knows that we have need of theſe things; and if we ſeek firſt his Kingdom, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, he will not ſuffer us to want them, for they ſhall be added unto us. *ver.* the laſt.

In a word, as we are the Children of God, we are to pray to him for all that we lack, and praiſe him for all that we receive; and in ſo doing, we ſhall be heard and accepted in both.

DIS-

DISCOURSE IX.

Rom. 8. 17. *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ.*

I Discourſed the laſt time, concerning the ſecond Priviledge promiſed and conveyed in Baptiſm, *viz.* Our *Adoption*, in theſe words, *wherein I was made a Child of God*. Which I told you was a Priviledge, which we have not by our Natural Birth; for we are born the Children of Wrath and Diſobedience, a degenerate Race, a Seed of Evil-doers, and the corrupt Off ſpring of Fleſh and Blood; but by the Water of Baptiſm, this Guilt and Pollution is waſhed off, and we are ſo purified, as to become the Sons and Children of God: Of which before. I come now to the

Third and Laſt Priviledge mentioned in our Catechiſm, and contained in thoſe words, *wherein I was made an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.* This our Apoſtle here makes to be a Conſequent of the former, *for if Children*

dren, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ. From which, therefore, I shall Discourse to you concerning the last and great Priviledge: To which end, I must enquire,

I. What we are to understand here by the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. What it is to be an Inheritor of this Kingdom of Heaven.

III. How this Priviledge is promised and conveyed in Baptism. For the

First, The Kingdom of Heaven is variously understood in the New Testament; but 'tis chiefly used to signify, either the Kingdom of Grace, here in this Life; or the Kingdom of Glory in the World to come.

By the Kingdom of Grace here, we are to understand the happy State of the Gospel, begun at Christ's coming into the World, and continued by Preaching the glad Tidings and Means of Salvation ever since; of this is to be understood that of *John* the Baptist, who gave the first Notice of the approach of it, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of*

Heaven is at hand, Mat. 3. 1. meaning, the Kingdom of the *Messias*, or the State of the Gospel. Thus is it understood likewise in *Mat.* 11. 12. where the Kingdom of Heaven is said to suffer Violence. And generally, in all the Parables of our Saviour, where the Kingdom of Heaven is liken'd to various and sundry things, it is to be understood of this Gospel Dispensation, or the Kingdom of the *Messias*.

Now the Kingdom of Heaven, in this Sense, being the same with the Christian Church, into which we are admitted by Baptism; cannot be meant in this place of our Catechism, because this is included in the first Priviledge, before treated of, by which we are made the Members of Christ, that is, of Christ's Church; and are thereby admitted to all the Grace and Favour of this Gospel Administration. But the being made *an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*, being mentioned here as a distinct Priviledge, and indeed the top and completion of all the rest, must be understood of the Kingdom of Glory hereafter; which is, that happy and glorious State of Saints and Angels with God in the World to come. In this Sense, we are to understand it, in all those places where

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the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, is promised as the Reward of the Righteous; and the Exclusion from it, is threatned as the Punishment of the Wicked, as *Mat.* 5. 3. 20. 1. *Cor.* 6. So is it meant likewise in that of our Saviour, *Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven*, Mat. 7. 21. That is, not they that barely profess Christianity, shall be admitted to a State of future and eternal Happiness; but they that Practise and live accordingly. Indeed, the Profession alone is sufficient to gain admittance into the visible Church or Kingdom of Grace here on Earth; but nothing less than a suitable Life and Practice can procure an Entrance into the Church Triumphant, or Kingdom of Glory hereafter in Heaven.

In this Sense, we are to take these words in our Catechism, when we are said to be made Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven; namely, of a future State of eternal Bliss and Glory, a State of the greatest Joy and Blessedness that our Natures are capable of receiving; a State, in which all the Crowns, Kingdoms, and Glories of this World, fall vastly short of the Happiness of it; yea, are

but Shadows and Trifles, if compared with it.

In a word; a State of that unspeakable Happiness, *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of Man to conceive, the great things that are prepared and to be enjoy'd in it.* This then is the Kingdom. But,

Secondly, What is it to be an Inheritor of this Kingdom of Heaven? Why, in short, 'tis to be an Heir to it, as a Son is to the Inheritance of his Father; hence our Text tells us, *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God*, that is, he makes us Heirs to this Kingdom, *and Joint-Heirs with Christ*, his only Son, and our elder Brother. So that this is not like earthly Kingdoms and Inheritances, that go only to the elder Brother; no, God makes all his Children Heirs, and Joint-partakers of his heavenly Kingdom; for *if Children, then Heirs*, &c. and if a Son, *then an Heir through Christ*, Gal. 4. 7. For which Reason all the People of God are stiled Heirs of Salvation, *Heb.* 1. 14. That is, 'tis secured to, and entailed upon them. And our Catechism calls them Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now

Now this ſhews us the Tenure by which we hold this heavenly Kingdom, which we are here, and frequently elſewhere, told in Scripture, is by Inheritance, which gives us the Title of Heirs; and in the laſt Sentence, we are bid *to inherit the Kingdom prepared for us*. Of all Tenures, you know, that of Inheritance is reckoned the beſt, becauſe 'tis unlimited and perpetual; that which is held by Leaſe, expires; and that which is held by Lives, dies likewiſe and falls away: But what is held by Inheritance, or in Fee, is our own for ever. Now this is the Tenure by which we hold this heavenly Kingdom, to which we are Heirs, 'tis by Inheritance for ever; *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom*, &c.

And as Inheritance is the beſt Tenure; ſo that of a Kingdom is the higheſt and beſt Inheritance. A ſmall Cottage, or a little Spot of Earth, may be held by Inheritance; but this is not to be named with the noble Inheritance of a Kingdom, which affords all that heart can wiſh. Again,

All that we hold of this World by Inheritance, muſt be left to our Heirs, becauſe we cannot live always here to enjoy it; but the Kingdom of Heaven, of which we are made

Inheritors, will be everlasting; and we shall always Live our selves, and be happy in the Enjoyment of it: Hence St. *Peter* stiles it an *Inheritance immortal, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; but reserved for ever in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. And as the Inheritance is incorruptible; so he tells us, ver. 23, 24, *That we are born of an incorruptible Seed, and begotten again to a lively hope of for ever possessing and enjoying of it.*

Moreover, all earthly Inheritances may be forfeited or lost, they are liable to Violence, Rapine and Confiscation, with many other Disasters. Yea, all earthly *Kingdoms* may be shaken, the *Crowns* may be taken from the Heads of Princes, and their Honour laid in the Dust. Yea, we read of some who have voluntarily resigned their Crowns, to be rid of the Cares, Fears, and Troubles, that lay under them. Whereas this heavenly *Kingdom*, which Christians are made to inherit, is never to be lost or forfeited; 'tis above the Violence, Malice, or Malignity of Enemies; 'tis entirely free from all Fears and Cares, and out of the reach of all Misfortunes. *We receive a Kingdom*, saith the Apostle, *that cannot be moved*, Heb. 12. 28. A *Kingdom* that can neither be moved from

us,

us, nor we from it; this is indeed the principal Flower of this Crown of Glory, that it fadeth not away; but is eternal in the Heavens; 'tis the chiefest Jewel in this heavenly Diadem, that 'tis everlasting, and suffers not Diminution or Decay: We hold it by Inheritance for ever, and by a Right that shall never be taken from us. But how is this Inheritance conveyed to us in our Baptism, wherein (our Catechism tells us) we are made Inheritors of this *Kingdom of Heaven*? This is the

Third thing propounded to be spoken to, which will lead us from the Tenure to consider our Title to this heavenly *Kingdom*. For the better understanding whereof, we must Note,

1st, That we are not Born to this Inheritance, and so can have no natural Right to it; for we are all Born in Sin, and come into the World Heirs of Hell and Damnation. That first Sin which shut our first Parents out of Paradise, had for ever excluded all their Posterity out of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, if some other way had not been found out for their Salvation. And therefore we must know

2dly, That all the Right and Title, we have or can pretend to this heavenly *Kingdom*, is derived to us entirely through the Mercy and Merits of Jesus Christ; For the *Apostle* tells us, *That we are Sons and Heirs only through Christ*, Gal. 4 7. and elsewhere, *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs, according to the hope of eternal Life*, Tit. 3. 5, 6, 7. So that we must know,

3dly, That by this means, we have a firm and indefectible Title to this *Kingdom of Heaven*; for as an Heir hath a legal Right and Claim to his Inheritance; so hath God vouchsafed to his Heirs through Christ, a legal Claim and Title to his *Kingdom in Heaven*.

But how come they by this Claim? why, sundry ways; as

First,

First, They have it by a Right of Purchase; not indeed their own, for they have nothing of value sufficient for such a Purchase; but our blessed Saviour's, whose Merits were sufficient, not only to attone for the Sins, but to procure the Happiness, of all Mankind; *for he laid down his Life, and gave himself a Ransom for all,* 1 Tim. 2. 6. *And shed his own precious and invaluable Blood, as the Price of their Redemption,* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. By which means, we *are bought with a Price out of the Hands of our Enemies, and Heaven is become our purchased Possession,* Eph. 1. 14. Again,

Secondly, The Children of God may claim this Inheritance by a Right of Promise, it being made over to them by the Word, back'd with the Oath of God, for their greater Security: For so the Apostle tells us, *That God, willing to shew to the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath, that by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lye, they might have the stronger Assurance and Consolation,* Heb. 6. 17, 18.

Lastly,

Lastly, This Inheritance is made theirs by a Deed of Gift; for though it be purchased by Christ, and promised by our heavenly Father; yet, in respect of us, 'tis purely a Gift, who could neither merit nor effect it for our selves. *Fear not, little Flock*, saith our Saviour, *'tis your Father's pleasure to give you a Kingdom*, Luke 12. 32. All earthly Princes receive their Crowns from him; and all the Saints owe this Crown of Glory entirely to his good-will and pleasure.

Hence the Apostle stiles eternal Life the Gift of God, *Rom.* 6. *ult.* 'Twere Arrogance to ascribe this either to the merit of our Works, or the purchase of our own Industry, who can neither deserve or do any thing in proportion to it. *By Grace ye are saved*, saith the same Apostle, *not of your selves, it is the Gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. *And not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done; but by his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Water, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5, 6.

Thus I have shewed you somewhat of the Glory of this Kingdom, the Title we have to it, and the Tenure we hold it by.

But

But ſtill it may be asked, *How theſe great things are made over to us in Baptiſm? Are all that are Baptized, partakers of theſe great Priviledges?* No! For

Though theſe great things are promiſed and tendered to all; yet this Promiſe is not abſolute, but conditional; ſomething is to be done on our part, to make us capable of them: Baptiſm is the Seal of the Covenant, in which theſe things are ſign'd and ſeal'd on God's part, but ſome Duties and Conditions are required to be performed by us; without which we are never like to be the better for them, as will be ſhewed hereafter. In the mean time we may learn hence,

1ſt, The Senſe and Truth of thoſe words of St. *Peter*, in the 1ſt Epiſt. ch. 3. ver. 21. *The like Figure whereunto even Baptiſm doth now alſo ſave us, not the putting away the filth of the Fleſh, but the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God.* Where the Saving of *Noah* and his Family in the Ark from the common Deluge, is made a Type or Figure of that Salvation we now receive by Baptiſm; in both which there is a Salvation by Water, as well as from it; for the ſame Water that was the Deſtruction of ſome, was the means of Sal-

Salvation unto others, by bearing up the Ark that preserved them. And as they in the Ark were saved from perishing by Water; so we now in the Church, by the Waters of Baptism, are saved from everlasting Destruction.

Another Figure hereof, was the Children of Israels passing thro' the Red Sea; where the same Water that drown'd the Ægyptians, became a Wall of Defence to the Israelites; signifying to us, that this Element, which hath been, and is to some, the Instrument of Destruction, is by consecrating of it to the holy Purposes of Baptism, become Salutary to us, and the Means of our Salvation.

Moreover, The Apostle there tells us, what it is in Baptism that now saves us, and the manner how it becomes Effectual to that end; which is not by the Outward Washing or putting away the Filth of the Flesh; but by the inward Purity of the Heart; represented there by the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.

2dly, From what hath been said upon this Head, we learn the exceeding great Honour and Dignity that Christianity brings its Followers to; it makes them Heirs at present,

and

and will ſhortly enter them into the Poſſeſſion of a Kingdom; not an earthly Kingdom, whoſe Glory ſoon fades and vaniſheth away; but a never-failing Kingdom in Heaven, where a Scepter of Righteouſneſs ſhall be put into their Hands, and a Crown of Glory ſit for ever upon their Heads. *Now we are the Sons of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *but it doth not yet appear, what we ſhall be; but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is,* 1 John 3. 2. The Viſion we ſhall then have of him, will not only tranſport, but transform us too, into the ſame Image; *And when he who is our Light ſhall appear, then ſhall we appear with him in Glory.*

Thirdly, From hence we learn farther, what a high Value we ought to ſet upon this ſacred Rite of Baptiſm, which initiates us into all theſe Rights, and inſtates us in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God: 'tis by this alone that we are received into the Ark of Chriſt's Church, and thereby kept from ſinking into everlaſting Perdition: by this we receive the Adoption of Children, and a Title to an everlaſting Inheritance. And how can we have too high an Eſteem for this

holy

holy Ordinance, that helps to invest us in all these noble and invaluable Prividges?

Fourthly, We learn from hence, not only the excellency, but necessity of Baptism; for as we are thus highly favoured by it, so we are miserable and undone without it. Baptism now saves us, by entering us into the Church, and making us Members of Christ's Body, whereby we derive Grace and Strength from him as our Head: but before and without this, we are out of the Church, and so out of the ordinary way of Salvation; being in the State of Heathens and Infidels without God and without Christ, and so without Hope in the World. Our Saviour expressly tells us, *That except a Man be born again of Water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 5. they that enter not by this Door into the Kingdom of Grace here, can never enter into the Kingdom of Glory hereafter. Wherefore,

Lastly, The weight and necessity of this Sacrament should carefully lead all Men to it, where it may be had; and caution every one against a wilful neglect of it. We read in the beginning of Christianity, how all Men flock-

flocked to *John*'s Baptism; how our Saviour dignified this Ordinance by submitting to it himself; and how all his Followers have been received this way into the Christian Church ever since. Yea, we find Christ himself declaring, That they who do not follow him in the Regeneration now, shall not follow him when he shall be revealed in his Glory at the last day.

Let all then that are unbaptized no longer defer it, but come with all speed to this necessary and beneficial Ordinance; and let all Parents take heed how they hazard the Salvation of their Children, by denying or delaying of it.

Thus I have done with the second Question and Answer in the Catechism, which contains those high and invaluable Blessings and Priviledges, promised and conferred on God's part in our Baptism, wherein we are made the *Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The next will lead us to the Duties or Conditions required on our part to make us capable of them; of which hereafter.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XI.

James 4. *Lat. part of the 7th Verse.* *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.*

I Finished the last time, the second Question and Answer in the Catechism; containing the inestimable Blessings and Priviledges promised on God's part, and conferred in the Baptismal Covenant, *viz.* Church Membership, Adoption, and a Right to the Inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven: All which being severally treated of, I proceed now to the

Third Question and Answer in the Catechism, containing the Terms and Conditions of the New Covenant, required on our part, in order to our being made Partakers of those forementioned Priviledges: For this Covenant (as I before hinted) is not absolute, but conditional; nor is Baptism alone sufficient to intitle us to the Mercies and Blessings promised in it; without the Answer of a good Conscience, in discharging the Duties engaged in it. The Third

Third Question then is, *What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?* To which the

Answer is, They promised and vowed three Things in my Name:

1st, That I should renounce the Devil and all his Works; the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.

2dly, That I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

3dly, That I should keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of my Life.

Which words contain the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant required on our part, which are to be promised by the Adult in their own Persons, who are Baptized in their riper Years; and for Children by their Sureties, who are Baptized in their Infancy.

Now the Terms and Conditions are these three.

I. Repentance, expreſſed here by renouncing our Ghoſtly Enemies, the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh.

II. Faith, expreſſed here by believing all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.

III. Obedience, expreſſed here by keeping God's holy Will and Commandments, and walking in the ſame all the days of our Life.

These things contain the whole of a Chriſtians Duty, and are ſufficient to entitle us to all the Merits of Chriſt's Death and Satisfaction, and therefore muſt be particularly explained.

The Firſt Condition then, to be perform'd on our part of this Baptiſmal Covenant, is Repentance, expreſſed here by renouncing our three deadly and ſpiritual Enemies, *viz.* the Devil, the World and the Fleſh; from all which we engage in our Baptiſm to turn away, with the moſt reſolute Defiance and Renunciation. For the better underſtanding whereof, I ſhall begin with the

(1.)

(1.) Enemy that is to be renounced, and that is the Devil: Of which I ſhall Diſcourſe at this time, from theſe words of St. *James*, *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will flee from you.* Where we have a Precept, which is to *Reſiſt the Devil:* And an Encouragement to it, becauſe in ſo doing, *he will flee from us.*

The Precept is, to *reſiſt or renounce the Devil*, the grand Enemy of God and our Salvation, whom we ſolemnly promiſe and engage in our Baptiſm to forſake.

By the Devil here, we are to underſtand that Arch-traytor or Rebel, who affecting to be like the moſt High, fell from his Duty and Allegiance to his Maker; and not only ſo, but drew the accurſed Crew of Apoſtate Angels into the ſame Conſpiracy. By this Revolt, they fell from their Integrity; and ſo leaving that firſt Station of Light and Glory, in which they were created, *are reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs to the Judgment of the laſt day.* This Arch-rebel is, in Scripture, mentioned under ſundry Names and Titles; ſometimes he is called *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the Devils; ſometimes *Satan*, for his Enmity both to God and Man; ſometimes *a roaring Lyon*, for his Rage and Cruelty;

sometimes the *Old Serpent*, for his Craft and Subtilty; at other times, he is called a *Dragon*, for his Fierceneſs and Contention, and moſt frequently ὁ Διάβολος, the *Devil*, for his being a Calumniator or Accuſer of the Brethren.

Now this Arch-traytor, partly out of Enmity to God, and partly out of Envy to Man's Salvation, uſes all his Art and Policy to deceive Mankind; and being fallen himſelf, ſeeks to draw them into the ſame Condemnation. To which end, he with his Legion of Infernal Spirits is daily ſolliciting them to Evil; and drawing them into a Contempt of God and his Laws. He beguiled our firſt Parents even in Paradiſe, and robbed them both of their Innocence and Happineſs together. And being encouraged with the Succeſs of that Attempt, hath not failed to Aſſault their Poſterity ever ſince. Yea, we find that he had Impudence enough to ſet upon the Son of God himſelf, who we read, was *led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted of the Devil*, Matth. 4. 1. And though our bleſſed Saviour ſhamefully foiled and baffled him in all his Attempts; yet this reſtleſs Adverſary ceaſes not ſtill to moleſt and aſſault his Followers; and like a Lion, greedy

of

of his Prey, is ever going to and fro *seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

This is the Devil, or that evil Spirit, which we are here, and in sundry places of Scripture, commanded to resist.

But what are we to understand here by resisting or forsaking the Devil?

In Answer to which, Three Things are plainly meant by it.

1st, The withstanding his usurpt Power.

2dly, The repelling of his Temptations.

And 3dly, The renouncing of his Works.

All which being included in our Text, and engaged in our Baptism, must be particularly spoken to.

(1.) To resist the Devil, is to disclaim and withstand his usurpt Power and Dominion: For Satan, both before and at the coming of Christ, had gotten a visible Kingdom, yea, almost the universal Empire of the World; hence he is stiled, *the Prince of this*

World, the Spirit that rules in the Children of Disobedience, John 14. 30. *The whole World*, as St. *John* tells us, *at that time lay in Wickedness*; in the Original it is, *in that wicked One, who had gotten the Sway and Dominion of it*; Yea, we find him called, *The God of this World*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. He had his Temples and his Altars; yea, and his Votaries too, who worshipped him with the most barbarous and bloody Sacrifices. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice*, saith the Apostle, *they sacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God*, 1 Cor. 10. 20. He had many solemn Rites, pompous Plays and Processions instituted and performed in Honour of him. This was the State of the World, and the exorbitant Power the Devil had over it in the beginning of Christianity.

Now when any were converted from Paganism to the Christian Religion, the primitive Christians expresly required from them a publick and open Renunciation, or Abjuration of the Devil; nor were any admitted into the Kingdom or Church of Christ, without an utter disowning and abandoning this his usurp'd Power and Authority. For which Reason, the embracing Christianity is in Scripture called, *A turning from Darkness to Light*,

Light; and from the Power of Satan unto God, Acts 20. 18. This (as a learned Catechiſt hath truly obſerved) is undoubtedly what the Primitive Church underſtood by renouncing the Devil, *viz.* The caſting off all that Homage, Service and Obedience, that the Pagan World paid him, by worſhipping of him or his wicked Angels; together, with the rejecting of all thoſe bloody Rites, lewd Plays, and pompous Proceſſions, that were made and obſerved in Honour of him. This likewiſe was the Senſe of thoſe Interrogatories that were put in Baptiſm, *Doſt thou renounce the Devil,* &c. The Anſwer whereunto is, by St. *Peter*, ſtiled, *The Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God.* VVhich Interrogatories we find mentioned by *Tertullian*, and other Fathers; and are continued down in the Chriſtian Church to this day.

And this is the firſt way of reſiſting the Devil, namely, by diſclaiming all Subjection to Satan's *Kingdom*, and becoming the faithful Subjects, Servants and Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt.

(2.) To reſiſt the Devil, is to reſiſt all his Temptations. Among the other Titles given to this wicked One in holy Scripture, he

World, the Spirit that rules in the Children of Disobedience, John 14. 30. *The whole World*, as St. *John* tells us, *at that time lay in Wickedness*; in the Original it is, *in that wicked One, who had gotten the Sway and Dominion of it*; Yea, we find him called, *The God of this World*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. He had his Temples and his Altars; yea, and his Votaries too, who worshipped him with the most barbarous and bloody Sacrifices. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice*, saith the Apostle, *they sacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God*, 1 Cor. 10. 20. He had many solemn Rites, pompous Plays and Processions instituted and performed in Honour of him. This was the State of the World, and the exorbitant Power the Devil had over it in the beginning of Christianity.

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Light; and from the Power of Satan unto God, Acts 20. 18. This (as a learned Catechist hath truly observed) is undoubtedly what the Primitive Church understood by renouncing the Devil, *viz.* The casting off all that Homage, Service and Obedience, that the Pagan World paid him, by worshipping of him or his wicked Angels; together, with the rejecting of all those bloody Rites, lewd Plays, and pompous Processions, that were made and observed in Honour of him. This likewise was the Sense of those Interrogatories that were put in Baptism, *Dost thou renounce the Devil,* &c The Answer whereunto is, by St. *Peter*, stiled, *The Answer of a good Conscience towards God.* VVhich Interrogatories we find mentioned by *Tertullian*, and other Fathers; and are continued down in the Christian Church to this day.

And this is the first way of resisting the Devil, namely, by disclaiming all Subjection to Satan's *Kingdom*, and becoming the faithful Subjects, Servants and Soldiers of Jesus Christ.

(2.) To resist the Devil, is to resist all his Temptations. Among the other Titles given to this wicked One in holy Scripture, he

is often stiled ὁ πειράζων, *the Tempter*, Matth. 4. 3. 1 Thes. 3. 5. It being his great Business to tempt and entice Men to Sin; and from his unwearied Diligence herein, he is said, *To be still walking about, seeking whom he may devour.*

Sometimes he tempts Men to Presumption of God's Mercy, without using the Means appointed to the attaining it.

At other times, he tempts them to Despair, in the most diligent Use of them. Sometimes he allures them into Evil, by the Smiles and Flatteries of the World. At other times, he affrights them into it by the Frowns and Adversities of it. Sometimes again, he entices Men into Vice by the Baits of Pleasure, and inveigles them with the Softness and Blandishments of sensual Delights. At other times, he discourages them from Vertue, by the Pains and Hardships that attend it. These and many other ways, hath he to draw Men into Sin, and to get them into his Snare. He sets upon our Saviour with many of them; and though he was manfully repulsed by the Captain of our Salvation, yet he is daily trying the Strength and Constancy of his Followers ever since. But the various Wiles and Methods of Satan's Temptations, are so largely and learnedly laid open by Dr. *Bray*, in his

his tenth and following Lectures on the Catechiſm; that I ſhall not need to inſiſt farther upon them; and therefore refer you to them.

Now to withſtand the force of theſe Temptations, ſo as not to yield or be drawn aſide by them, and to repel the Danger and Importunity of them, is the ſecond way, that we are required and engaged to reſiſt the Devil. The

Third is, to renounce or forſake the Works of the Devil. But theſe being ſo many, and ſo pernicious to the Peace of Chriſt's Kingdom, as well as the Welfare of our Souls will require a particular Diſcourſe of them, which ſhall be done in the next. In the mean time, let us ſee how we may be beſt enabled to withſtand the power, and reſiſt the force of Satan's Temptations. To which end, St. *Paul* hath furniſhed Chriſtians with Armour ſufficient for this Warfare; the Weapons whereof, he tells us, *are not carnal, for we fight not with Fleſh and Blood; but againſt Principalities and Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, and againſt Spiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places.* So that the Armour ſuited to this Combat, muſt be Spiritual; *And theſe*, he tells us, *will be mighty through*

through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

Now the Armor prescribed by the Apostle for this purpose, is at large set forth in the 6th chap. to the *Ephesians*; where the

First thing, he wills us to put on, is the *Girdle of Truth*, ver. 14. *Having your Loyns girt with Truth*; that is, with *Knowledge* and *sound Religion*, by which, as by the military Belt or Girdle, all divine Truths are tied and fastened on the mind; expressed elsewhere, by *Girding up the Loyns of the Mind*, which will keep the Soul from running into Licentiousness, as a Girdle restrains and keeps in the Body.

Secondly, The next piece of Armor, he directs us to put on, is the *Breast-plate of Righteousness*; by which is meant, that Integrity of Heart, that is to accompany our knowledge, without which we are not able to stand in the evil Day; for 'tis this Purity of Heart and Mind, that guards us from the Wiles of Satan, as a Breast-plate does from the Darts of an Enemy. Thirdly,

Thirdly, Another thing we are to take care of, is to have our Feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace; which ſignifies our readineſs to do the Will of God, and run the Paths of his Commandments; for the putting on of Shoes, implies Readineſs and Activity; and denotes the Alacrity and Cheerfulneſs of our Obedience.

Fourthly, Another principal part of this Armor, is the Shield of Faith, ver. 16th, *Above all things, taking on the Shield of Faith, wherewith we ſhall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked.* Now by this is meant a firm and ſtedfaſt Belief, both of the Promiſes made to penitent Sinners, and the Threats denounced againſt all wilful and impenitent Offenders: which may ſerve as a Shield to keep of all the fiery Darts of Satan.

Fifthly, The next piece of Armor we are bid to put on, is the Helmet of Salvation, ver. 17. By which is meant the Hope of Salvation. A Helmet ſerves to defend the Head, as the other Armor does the Body, from the Blows of an Aſſailant; in like manner this Hope of Salvation, ſecures the Soul from

from the most violent assaults of our Ghostly Enemies; 'tis somtimes stiled the Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast, that holds it steddy in a Storm, and keeps it from fluctuating in the greatest Tempest.

Sixthly, The next piece of this Armour, we are to make use of, is the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, ver. 18th. This cuts through the greatest Difficulties, and confounds all the Enemies of the Truth. This VVeapon our Saviour made use of in his Conflict with the Devil; alledging on all occasions the VVord of God, and baffling all his Temptations with, *It is written*, Mat. 4. For which reason, the Apostle stiles it, *A two edged Sword, quick and powerful, divideing asunder between the Joynts and the Marrow, the Soul and the Spirit; and is a Discerner of all the thoughts and intentions of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 11.

Lastly, To all this the Apostle adds Prayer, to compleat the Armour, and to render it successful, ver. 18. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance.* 'Tis Prayer that gives all the force and efficacy to

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our Endeavours, for this calls in the Aid and Assistance of Heaven to our Relief, and if God be for us; who can be against us?

This is a brief account of the *Panoply*, or whole *Armour of God*, which the *Apostle* exhorts all Christians to put on, that they may be able to withstand the evil One, and to stand too in the Evil-day.

But what Encouragement have we thus to resist the Power and Temptations of the *Devil*. The answer to this will bring me to the

Last particular of our Text, which gives us abundant Encouragement to engage in this Combat, from a well-grounded assurance of Success and Victory; for *if we resist the Devil, he will flee from us*. We are not bid to encounter an Enemy that we cannot conquer; nor left to the hazard of a Battle, in which we may be foiled and vanquish'd: No, we are bid only to resist a conquered Foe, and if we manfully withstand him, we shall be *more than Conquerors through Christ that loveth us; for he hath already subdued the power, and vanquished the forces of the Devil; he hath dethroned this Prince of Darkness, and destroyed his Kingdom*. So that you need not doubt the Issue of your Encounter; your Adversa-

sary's

sary's Forces are broken and routed; and if you set your selves in good earnest to resist him, he will flee from you; 'tis but to keep your Ground, and you may be sure to win the Field, let Satan be never so crafty or formidable a Foe, if you do not cowardly consent or yield to him, his utmost Rage and Subtilty; nay, his greatest Malice and Cruelty, shall not do you any harm; for if you do not too easily surrender, you shall, upon request, be supplied with that assistance from above, that shall not only enable you to hold out, but secure you from the danger of all his Attempts. And now I think I may well enough renew the *Apostle*'s advice, and exhort you (as you have engaged) to resist or renounce the *Devil*, against whom you are sufficiently armed, not only with the knowledge of his *D*evices, but likewise with power and strength enough to overcome them.

To which end, let me Counsel you, Not to listen to any of the temptations of the *D*evil; but to resist and suppress the first motions of them: do not admit a Parly with the Tempter, for he is a cunning and sly Adversary; he prevailed upon our first Parents in their Innocency, and hath improved his Craft in *D*eceiving, by a long exercise and

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experience ever ſince. And therefore do not give way to him, but check the very beginnings of his aſſault, and give him no encouragement to renew his attempt; but ſay, with our Saviour (who was much better able to reſiſt him than we are) *Get thee behind me Satan.*

And the better to enable you to make this Reſiſtance, you muſt frequently implore the divine Aſſiſtance by diligent Prayer; for we are too weak of our ſelves to withſtand ſo powerful an Enemy; but the Grace of God will be ſufficient for us; and though we can do nothing of our ſelves, yet we may with St. *Paul*, do all things through Chriſt, that ſtrengthens us, whoſe Grace and Favour therefore we ſhould not only pray for, but chiefly rely upon.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XI.

1 John 3. 8. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

I Began the last time, with that part of the Baptismal Covenant, that concerns the baptized Party, who is thereby required and engaged,

First, Solemnly to renounce and abjure the Three great Enemies of God and our own Souls, *viz.* The Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

I have made some Entrance on our Renunciation of the,

1st Of these, from those Words of St. *James, Resist the Devil and he will flee from you*; where I mentioned Three ways of resisting of him, *viz.*

First, By withstanding his usurped Power and Dominion.

Secondly,

Secondly, By rejecting his Temptations. And,

Thirdly, By renouncing his Works.

Of the Two first, I treated in the last Exercise; in which I gave you some Encouragements and Directions, the better to excite and enable you to both.

It remains now, that I proceed to the

Third way of resisting him; which is, By renouncing the Works of the Devil: Of which I shall discourse from these Words of St. *John, To this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

I shewed the last time, how our Saviour was manifested to destroy the Power of the Devil. For, at his coming into the World, the whole World lay in Wickedness; Vices had their Temples and their Votaries too; evil Spirits had gotten possession of the Minds and Bodies of Men; and by their false and feigned Oracles, for a long time commanded

and beguiled the World: we read, That they made their very Children to pass through the Fire to *Molock*, and sacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils. Yea, so far had Satan deceived Mankind, that he made them to worship their very Sicknesses and Diseases; and Men became Idolaters to their own Infirmities. But Christ, who was that Seed of the Woman that was to bruise the Serpent's Head, divested Satan of this Power; he cast out Devils, and dispossessed whole Legions of evil Spirits; he spoiled Principalities and Powers, and threw down spiritual Wickednesses from their high Places; making a Shew of them openly on the Cross, and triumphing over them in it, *Col.* 2. 15. Hence we read how *Michael* and his Angels, fought with the Dragon and his Angels; which was Christ's dispossessing and driving out Satan: and the Issue of the Combat was, that he *beheld Satan, like Lightning, fall from Heaven*, Luke 10. 18. And the Author to the *Hebrews* declares, *That Christ destroyed him that had the Power of Death, which is the Devil*, Heb. 2. 14. By all which it appears, that the Son of God was manifested to dissolve the Kingdom of Darkness, to destroy the Power of Satan, and to rescue Mankind from that

vile Bondage and Slavery they were in to him.

Now St. *John* adds here a farther end of his Manifestation, which was not only to subdue the Power, but to destroy the Works of the Devil. And this he did, not only in his own Person, and by his own Power, but by the Assistance of his Grace, in the Person of all his Followers; who are thereby enabled, not only to abandon their evil Deeds, but to become a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. For the better clearing whereof, I must enquire,

First, What is here meant by the Works of the Devil?

Secondly, How the Son of God is said to have destroyed them? And,

Lastly, Conclude with an Exhortation and Encouragement to renounce them.

For the 1st, All Sin in general may be justly stiled the Works of the Devil; for the *Devil sinneth from the beginning*, saith St. *John*; and *whosoever committeth Sin is of the Devil.*

He was the first Author, and is still the Instigator to all manner of Wickedness, which may be therefore truly reckoned to be his Works. All Sin is a disowning the Authority of God, and a throwing off Obedience to his Laws; of which the Devil giving the first Instance, and still continuing to draw in others to do likewise, all such Practices may be intitled to him; and they that do so, may be justly said to do the Works of the Devil.

But there are some particular Sins, that more especially owe their beginning to this evil Spirit, and carry the more particular Marks and Lineaments of their Father the Devil; which are therefore more especially to be forsaken and renounced by us.

I shall mention some of the chief of them, that you may the better know what is meant and promised by *Renouncing the Devil and all his Works*. And,

First, Idolatry of all sorts, which is the giving the Honour due to God, to any Creature, is a Work of the Devil. This we find invaded and usurped by this grand Apostate, who not only arrogated the divine Honour and Worship to himself, but was likewise

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the Author of all the Pagan Idolatries; he tempted our bleſſed Saviour with the promiſe of the Kingdoms and Glories of the World, to fall down and worſhip him; which our Saviour repelled with that expreſs Command of the divine Majeſty, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, Mat. 4. 10. Hereby the Son of God deſtroyed this Work of the Devil, and hath given us both a Precept and Preſident to renounce it.

2dly, All recourſe to Witches, Wizzards or Fortune-tellers, about the Loſs, Fortunes or Recovery, of any Perſons or Things: And likewiſe, the making uſe of Spells, Charms or Enchantments, to thoſe Ends, is a Work of the Devil. The Knowledge and Diſpoſal of future contingent Things, is the incommunicable Property of God, who challenges this as his Prerogative, and upbraids the Idols of the Heathens for lack of it; Let them ſhew things to come. So that to aſcribe this to Conjurers, Charmers, Necromancers, or the like; or to betake our ſelves to them for any Diſcovery, Help or Aſſiſtance in theſe things, is to rob God of the Honour of his Attributes, and to give his Glory to another.

Yea, this strikes directly at the Authority of our Maker, and invades his Soveraignty, which is the Work and Business of evil Spirits; and by seeking to them, we comply with their designs, and set up Satan's Kingdom against Christ's, which is a manifest breach of this part of our Vow. To prevent which, read the strict Charge given by God Almighty in this matter, *Deut.* 18. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. where this Sin is condemned as a diabolical Invention, and an Abomination to the Lord; and is therefore to be renounced as one of the Works of the Devil.

3dly, Pride is another Work of the Devil to be renounced by us: This is supposed to be the first Sin of those evil Angels, and the occasion of their Fall; for affecting to be equal, if not superiour, to the most High; they were for their Pride cast down from those blessed Mansions of Light and Glory in which they were first seated, into the black Abyss of eternal Darkness. And this shews us the evil and danger of this Sin, which is the great cause of all the misery, trouble and disturbances of the VVorld: and likewise how much we are concerned to avoid this loftiness and elation of Mind, lest being lifted

lifted up with Pride, *we fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*

4thly, Envy is the VVork of the Devil which we are engaged to renounce; this is an evil Eye at anothers Prosperity: Accordingly these apostate Spirits being uneasy at the Happiness of Mankind, sought by all ways to work their Ruin; and being fallen themselves, laboured to draw them into the same condemnation. This Temper made them indeed Devils, and where 'tis found 'tis truly diabolical: which should teach us by all means to mortify and renounce it; and instead of it, to endeavour to be like God, in all the ways of Beneficence and Charity.

5thly, Lying is another VVork of the Devil that we are to renounce: *When he speaketh a Lye* (saith the Apostle) *he speaketh of himself; for he is a Lyar from the beginning, and the Father of it,* John 8. 44. He deceived our first Parents with a Lye; *Ye shall not surely die* (saith he); when God had told them they should; yea, he made them believe they should be like Gods, by doing that which made them like Devils: thus did he ruin Mankind at first with a Lye, and hath

continued to beguile the World ever since with his Lyes and Impostures. This should warn all Christians to abhor this evil Practice of Lying, which makes them not the Children of God, but to be of their Father the *Devil*. But especially they should avoid that sort of it, that consists in slandering and false-accusing, which makes them most nearly resemble him, who is therefore called ὁ διάβολος, *The Calumniator or Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. 12. 10.

Lastly, To tempt or draw any into Sin is a Work of the *Devil*, and such a one too, as carries a more especial Character or Stamp of Satan upon it, for he is stiled the *Tempter*; and these that any way sollicite or importune others into any kind of Sin are of their Father the *Devil*, and imitate him in his prime Work and Business, which is to go up and down *seeking whom he may devour*.

In a word, all such as delight themselves in the love or practice of any known Sin, or draw others into it, are the Imps of Satan, and do the Works of the *Devil*.

But how hath the Son of God destroyed the Works of the *Devil*? Or, What kind of Victory hath he given us over them?

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In Answer to which, I say, That he hath not at present so far destroyed them, as to root out the very Being of Sin, or totally free us from the Assaults and Temptations of Satan: No, this is reserved for the happiness and perfection of our future State. But he hath broken their Power, and vanquished the Dominion of them; insomuch, that *Sin shall not reign in our mortal Bodies*, nor force us to *obey it in the Lusts thereof*; and tho' Satan may tempt us, yet without our own consent, he cannot prevail or overcome us.

And this Victory we have gained over them; not by any natural Strength or Ability of our own, but wholly by the Efficacy and Assistance of divine Grace; for tho' our own Power be too weak, yet his Grace is sufficient for us: the Son of God having instructed us in the Wiles, and by the gracious Aid of his holy Spirit, fortified us against the Works of the *Devil*.

And now we may see what Encouragement we have *to renounce the Devil and his all Works*, since his Power is vanquished, and his Works are all destroyed for us. To which may be added,

First,

First, That this is no more than what we have all solemnly vow'd and promised to do, having disclaimed Satan, and bid an open defiance to all his Works. And if we consider the time when this was done, together with the manner of doing it, you will easily see the strength and firmness of this Obligation; 'twas at the time of our admission into the Church, and entrance upon Christianity; 'twas when we listed our selves in Christ's Service, giving up our Names to him, and taking his upon us; then it was that we disclaimed this deadly Foe, entring into a holy War against him, and promising our Saviour to be faithful and constant in his Service; and can any thing import us more than to answer such a solemn Engagement? Must it not be a shameful thing for us now to be found working the Works of Satan, and forsaking Christ, to whom we have promised all Fidelity? What is this, but to desert the Captain of our Salvation, and basely fly to the Enemy we have renounced? than which nothing can be more perfidious. Again,

Secondly, Our Text expresly declares, the great end of Christ's coming into the World, to be the destruction of Satan's Kingdom, for this

this purpose was the *Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* Yea, this was the end not only of his Life, but his Death too; *for he gave himself*, saith the Apostle, *to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*, Tit. 2. 13. And is it fit, think you, to disappoint the Saviour of the World, in the main end of his coming into it? and to defeat the designs of his good-will and kindness unto mankind? Shall we give up our selves to the rage and cruelty of that roaring Lion, which he came on purpose to destroy, and yield our selves willing Bondslaves to the Enemies from which he came to rescue and deliver us? This is to make the Son of God to live and die for us to no purpose; and to say in effect with those in the Gospel, *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* This is the Sense and Language of all such as so readily hearken to Satan's Temptations, and are so easily misled by them; they renounce their own Vows, instead of the Devil's Works; and leaving their best Friend, choose rather to adhere to the worst and vilest of all Enemies. But farther to encourage you to mind your Promise of *renouncing the Devil and all his Works*; consider,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The great Benefit that will accrue to you by this solemn Abjuration; for hereby you are translated from the Power of Satan unto God, you become the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, and are entituled to all the Glories and Priviledges of it: He is become the Author of eternal Salvation, to all those that obey him, *Heb.* 6. This gives you an Interest in the Merits of Christ's Death, and Satisfaction, and in all the Happiness obtained and purchased by them: Insomuch, that by renouncing the Devil, you rescue your selves from his power and malice: And by adhering to Christ, you are made partakers of all the Promises and Blessings of his Incarnation. Whereas,

Fourthly, The danger of not observing our Promise to forsake the Devil and all his Works, is very great and unexpressible; for hereby we forfeit all the Benefits and Priviledges of our Baptism; instead of being made Members of Christ, we continue Slaves to the Devil; instead of being Children of God, we are the Brats and Instruments of Satan; and instead of Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, are only Heirs of Hell and Damnation.

What the Apoſtle told the Jews concerning Circumciſion, may be fitly applied to Chriſtians touching their Baptiſm: *For Circumciſion*, ſaith he, *verily profiteth, if thou be a Keeper of the Law; otherwiſe, thy Circumciſion is become Uncircumciſion.* In like manner, Baptiſm indeed profiteth much, if thou obſerve the Promiſe made in it; otherwiſe, if thou break it, thy Baptiſm is no better than Heatheniſm; unleſs we perform our part of the New Covenant, Baptiſm will avail us nothing, but will leave us ſtill in the natural and forlorn Condition of Infidels; without forſaking Sin and Satan, we ſhall remain under the power of both, and ſo can have no Benefit by any thing that Chriſt did or ſuffered for us; 'twill be in vain to alledge, at the laſt day, that we have been Baptized, or have Prophecied in his Name, if we have not renounced the Works of the Devil, we ſhall be bid to *depart, as Workers of Iniquity, into the place of Torment, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

What remains then, but that we may learn from hence, to ſet our ſelves againſt this firſt and grand Enemy of our Souls; that as the Son of God was manifeſted to deſtroy the Works of the Devil; ſo we manifeſt

our

our duty to him, by an utter disclaiming and forsaking of them. Hereunto we stand obliged in point of Justice, being under a solemn Vow and Promise so to do, and we must be false and unjust if we do otherwise. Beside, we are bound to it in point of Gratitude, our blessed Saviour having subdued Satan under our Feet, and thereby translated us from a State of Bondage, into the *glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.* Finally,

We are engaged to it in point of Interest, all the Mercies and Priviledges of our Baptism being suspended upon this Condition; insomuch, that the Waters of Baptism will save us, if they drown our Sins, and bury in them the Works of the Devil; otherwise, they will serve only to sink us into the deeper Perdition.

But how are we to renounce the Devil and all his Works? I shall add a word to this, and conclude. To which end, you must know, that these things being absolutely and entirely Evil, are to be totally and thoroughly renounced by us; we must not cherish any reserve of Love or Kindness to any one Sin; but must universally abhor and abandon all the kinds and degrees of it. The VVorld and the Flesh have a mixture of something

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that is good and lawful in them, and ſo may have ſome moderate degrees of affection and regard allowed to them. But the *Devil* is that wicked One, that hath all Evil in himſelf, and is the cauſe of all Evil in others, and therefore is to be abſolutely and entirely renounced by all that love God, or wiſh well to their own Souls; for there is *no Concord between Chriſt and Belial*; *we cannot ſerve two Maſters*: if we do not renounce the *Devil* and all his Works, we muſt renounce Chriſt and all his VVays. And then what can be expected, but that he will renounce and diſown us at the laſt day?

This I have ſpoken to the firſt Enemy we are obliged by our Baptiſm to renounce, and that is the *Devil*; to which we have abundant Encouragement both from St. *James*, who tells us, *That if we reſiſt him, he will flee from us*; and from St. *John*, who declares, That the Son of God appeared on purpoſe to deſtroy, *&c.*

DIS-

DISCOURSE XII.

1 John 2. 15. *Love not the World, nor the things that are in the World; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.*

I Treated, in the Two last Discourses, of the first and grand Enemy, that by our baptismal Vow we stand engaged to renounce, and that is, *The Devil and all his Works.* I come now to the

II. And that is, *The World, with all the Pomps and Vanities thereof:* Of which, I shall discourse to you from these VVords of St. *John*, *Love not the World, nor the things of the World*, &c. In the Verses immediately foregoing, he declares his writing both to Fathers and young Men, was, because they had overcome the wicked One: meaning, that they had gotten some Ground upon their first Enemy the Devil, and had in a great measure vanquished Satan: from thence he proceeds here, in the VVords of my Text, to set them against the

II.

II. And to arm them againſt the Temptations of the VVorld. In ſpeaking therefore hereunto, I muſt enquire,

Firſt, VVhat is meant by the VVorld, which we are bid here not to love.

Secondly, VVhat by the things that are in the World, which we are required to renounce.

Thirdly, What we are to underſtand by the not loving or renouncing of them.

Fourthly, I muſt ſpeak to the Reaſon here given, taken from the inconſiſtency of the Love of the World with the Love of God; *If any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.* For the

1ſt, The World is ſometimes taken for the whole Frame of Nature which we behold, or the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, with all the variety of Creatures contained in it: in this Senſe, the World is the Workmanſhip of God, and is rather to be admired than renounced by us; for God ſaw, *that*

every thing he had made was very good, Gen. 1. 31. *David* made this the Subject of his daily Meditation, and hath taught us to set forth the Praise and Glory of our Creator, and to celebrate the infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, that shine so brightly in all the Works of his Hand: to renounce the World in this Sense, would be to despise the Workmanship of our Maker, and to disparage the Operations of his Hand.

2dly, The *World* is sometimes taken for evil Men, which make up the greatest part of it; for which reason 'tis called the *wicked World*, because it directly opposes God's Glory and our own Happiness; so 'tis taken *John* 7. 7. and in sundry other places. St. *James* stiles the Friendship of the *World*, Enmity with God, *James* 4. 4. In this Sense, to renounce the *World*, is to cast off all Intimacy and Familiarity with the wicked part of it, *Not to company with Fornicators*, as the Apostle exhorts, *or if any be an Idolater or Railer, a Drunkard or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat*, 1 Cor. 5. 11. Not that we are always to disclaim or refuse the company of wicked Men, for then (as the same *Apostle* tells us) *we must go out of the World*, or retire

retire into Desarts and Solitudes, which would be to flee from the Enemy that we are bid to conquer: but we are not to accompany them in their Sins, nor to contract any unnecessary Intimacy, so as to become Brethren and Companions with them in Iniquity; but to chose rather to walk in the solitary Paths of Vertue and Religion, than to follow a Multitude to do Evil, or be carried away with the Stream of their evil Example.

3dly, The *World* is sometimes taken for the sinful Customs, and vile Practices of the *World*: In this Sense is that of the Apostle, *Be not conformed to this World*, Rom. 12. 2. which forbids all Compliance or Conformity with the Vices and Wickedness of Men. Indeed the Heathen *World* (against which this part of the Vow was particularly directed) had many vile and barbarous Customs, some against the very Light of Nature and Reason; others against the written Law and Word of God: both which prevailed so far at that time, that St. *John* tells us, *the whole World lay in wickedness*. Now against these was this Vow chiefly framed, which requires all Christians to renounce all the lewd and barbarous Customs of the wicked *World*.

So that whatever Countenance or Encouragement Sin may at any time have, either by the Connivance of Authority, the Temptations of Company, or the Examples of great Men, yet ſtill we are to diſclaim and abandon it, *having no fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them.*

This, in ſhort, is that *World*, which the Apoſtle wills us not to love; and our Catechiſm here ſolemnly and reſolutely to renounce.

But what are the *Things of the World*, which the Apoſtle would have excluded likewiſe out of our Affections? *Love not the World, nor the Things of the World*; which being mentioned apart from the former, muſt be particularly conſidered.

Theſe our Catechiſm ſtiles, *the Pomps and Vanities of the World*; and by which we are to underſtand in general, all the Gaieties and glittering Shows of the *World*, that are apt to dazzle the Eyes, and draw away the Hearts of Men from better things.

More particularly, The Pomps and Vanities here at firſt pointed at, were thoſe gay Shows that were made by the Heathens in their Triumphs and Games: theſe we find peculiarly called *Pomps*, and being many of them

them uſed as ſacred Rites, in Honour of their Deities, were likewiſe juſtly ſtiled Vanities; both which the Chriſtians, upon their embracing of Chriſtianity, were required to renounce, as the Marks and Badges of Heatheniſm. Moreover,

All that Luxury and various kinds of Exceſſes, that were wont to accompany thoſe Seaſons of Jollity and Feſtivity, come under the Character of *the Pomps and Vanities of the World.*

Again, All that oſtentatious Bravery or Gallantry of Attire, that was uſed to adorn their Triumphs, and draw the Admiration of vain Men, fell under the ſame Character, and were to be renounced, as *the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World.*

In a word, All glittering Shows or Appearances, that adminiſter to Pride or the inflaming of Luſt, are to be reckoned among theſe Pomps and Vanities, and are by this part of our baptiſmal Vow renounced by all Chriſtians.

But St. *John*, in the next Verſe to our Text, hath ſummed up all the Things that are in the World under Three Heads.

1st, The Wealth and Riches of the *World*, called *the Lust of the Eye*; because all that is above our necessary use, is only the beholding of it with the Eye.

2dly, The Pleasures and Delights of the *World*, called *the Lusts of the Flesh*, because they serve only to gratify the Carnal or Sensual part.

3dly, The Honours and Glories of the *World*, stiled *the Pride of Life*, because they are apt to swell and puff Men up with Pride.

This being the Inventory of this *World's* Goods, it will be requisite to know how we are to use, and how to renounce them; for we are not debarred all use of this *World*, but are only bid so to use, as not to abuse it, or our selves by it. To which end, you must know,

First, That Wealth and Riches not being in themselves Evil, are not absolutely to be renounced; but contrarywise, being the Blessings of God, and affording great Advantages of doing good, both to our selves and others, are to be thankfully received and used by us. We are not required to vow Poverty, or disdainfully to reject the Favours of Hea-

Heaven: No, *'Tis the Bleſſing of God* (ſaith *Solomon*) *that maketh rich*, and bringeth no Trouble with it; yea, by uſing well the Subſtance which God giveth us, it will multiply into a greater Treaſure in Heaven, and lead to a far more enduring Subſtance. Then.

Secondly, For the Pleaſures of the *World*. Theſe likewiſe in their lawful Uſe afford great Benefit and Comfort to Mankind, and ſo are not abſolutely to be renounced: they ſerve to refreſh our Spirits, to quicken us in our Duty, and to lighten the Burthen of our Cares and Troubles. God Almighty hath planted in us natural Appetites and Deſires, and hath likewiſe given ſuitable Objects for their gratification: Neither hath he reſtrained us from a free and cheerful Uſe of them. Religion does not will us to hang down our Heads like a Bul-ruſh, nor doom us to an abſurd and perpetual Melancholy: No, 'tis ſo far from abridging, that it heightens and encreaſes our Pleaſures; *Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.*

Thirdly, For the Honours and Glories of the *World*. Theſe Two are of great Uſe, and ſerve many times to excellent Purpoſes;

for they excite to Vertue, and are a Spur to great and noble Undertakings. Honour is a necessary Ingredient and Attendant upon Power, for it makes Men bear the Burthen, and discharge the Business of their Places with greater Ease and Diligence; and likewise strikes those with greater Awe and Reverence, that are subject to their Authority.

So that these Things being not Evil, but Good, in themselves, and tending to many useful Purposes, are not absolutely to be renounced by us, we may not think that God Almighty hath filled the *World* only with Trifles, that are good for nothing but to be despised and trampled on; this were to Libel our Maker, and not only to Vilify his Blessings, but to Destroy the Encouragements of Industry and Vertue.

But how then are we to understand this Caution of the Apostle, against *loving the World, or the Things that are in it*? In Answer to which, I say,

1st, That this doth not condemn all moderate and subordinate Love to earthly Objects, for we are bid to love our Friends and Relations, and he that *hateth Father and Mother, shall die the Death.* Neither does it forbid

bid all regular Desires and Endeavours after the good things of this Life, but only moderates our Affections towards them. We are not hereby taught to cast off all due care and concern for worldly Things, or to abandon our selves to Idleness and a careless Neglect of them; for the Apostle wills, *to provide things honest in the sight of all Men*, Rom. 12. and he that provides not for his own House and Family *hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* So that this Caution in the Text is not designed to root out, but to regulate our Love to these Things: And therefore,

2dly, Both our Text and Catechism will us to renounce all inordinate Love of the *World*, and the Things of it, so as not to be inveagled by them; we must not love any thing in opposition to, or in competition with, the Love of God: He that *loveth Father or Mother more than me* (saith Christ) *is not worthy of me.* More particularly,

We are to renounce the inordinate Love of Riches, so as not to betake our selves to any indirect Means to get them. The Apostle speaks of some, that *will be rich*, they care not how, whether by Robbery, or Oppression,

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on, or Fraud, or any other unjuſt ways of Gain; and theſe he tells us, *fall into Temptations and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown them in Deſtruction and Perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9.

Again, We are not to deſire or uſe Riches to any bad Ends; as, to gratify our Luſts, or to ſupport Luxury and Intemperance: this is to turn the Bleſſings of God againſt himſelf, and to make the Inſtances of his Bounty, become the Inſtruments of his diſhonour.

Neither are we to put our *Truſt in uncertain Riches*, as too many do, who make it their Refuge and their ſtrong Tower, relying more on their Wealth than on the All-ſufficient God.

Nor Laſtly, Are we to dote ſo much upon the Wealth of this *World*, as to be unwilling to part with it, either by Acts of Charity, or Reſignation of it at God's Call, or in his Cauſe. Theſe are all Inſtances of an inordinate Love of Riches, which our baptiſmal Vow engages us to renounce.

Then for the Pleaſures of the *World*. We are utterly to renounce all unlawful Pleaſures; and likewiſe all immoderate Uſe of lawful Ones,

Ones, not suffering them to engross too much of our Time and Affections, which Religion requires should be laid out upon better and weightier Matters.

Lastly, For the Honours, Titles, and Glories of the *World*. These are to be renounced likewise, as the Pomps and Vanities of it; that is, we must not have too high a Value for them, nor value our selves too much upon them; being only vain, transitory, and uncertain things, that add no intrinsick worth to any Man's Person, and depend only upon the fickle inconstant Breath of other Men, we are not vainly to affect, or be ambitious of them, and much less to be lifted up with Pride by reason of them, or to look down with Scorn and Contempt on those that are beneath them: when it comes to this, they are Vanities indeed, and justly deserve to be renounced of all good Christians. Thus having shewed what is meant by *not loving the World, or the Things of it*, I proceed to the Reason here annexed, taken from,

The inconsistency of it with the Love of God, from those Words, *If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* The Force of this Reason, is taken from these words

words of our Saviour, *No Man can serve two Masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, Mat. 6. 24. Where the commands of two Masters are contrary and inconsistent (as 'tis in the present Case); there 'tis impossible to serve both. The Service of Mammon requires us to addict our Hearts and Affections to this *World*; the Service of God calls them off, and would have them fixed on a better: now here we must either renounce God or Mammon, Christ or the *World*; for if we stick to the one, we must forsake the other; their ways are so different, that none can follow both.

Now here, if we would consult the great Rule of Reason and Religion, there could be no difficulty in determining our Choice; for that wills, that the chiefest Good, should have our chiefest Esteem and our choicest Affections: now God being our supreme and chiefest Good, and the eternal Glories of the next *World*, infinitely surpassing the perishing Trifles of this, no wise Man can be at a Loss which way to incline.

Choose then, my Brethren, whom you will follow, God or Mammon, Christ or the *World*;

World; you cannot, you ſee, ſerve both: and tho' the odds be vaſtly great, yet you muſt renounce the one or the other.

But why ſhould I preſs this? You that are baptized have already made your Choice, for you therein promiſed to forſake the *World*, *and continue Chriſt's faithful Servants to your Lives end*; and you muſt be, not only fickle, but falſe and unfaithful, if you hearken to Satan's Temptations, or be led away by the Vanities and Allurements of the *World*. Wherefore, to draw to a concluſion, Let me adviſe you not to love the *World*, or the Things of it, but manfully to reſiſt and renounce both. To this end conſider,

That the *World* is a very tempting and dangerous Foe, and hath great Advantages upon us; its Glories are all preſent and in view, and ſo more apt to enveagle and engage the Affections; and tho' the Happineſs of Heaven infinitely tranſcends them, yet preſent things are apt to affect more, and draw ſtronger, than much greater things that are future and at a diſtance; and therefore we are to live more by Faith, which is the Evidence of things not ſeen, than by Sight, which is ſo eaſily dazzled and miſled by vain Appearances.

Beſide,

Besides, The *World* hath not only Smiles and Flatteries to allure, but Frowns and Threats to affright us into its Service; if it cannot draw us into Luxury and Pride, by Affluence and Plenty, it will tempt us to Envy and Discontent, by the Straitness of a meaner Condition: and therefore we have great need to watch and pray against an Enemy, that hath so many Stratagems to circumvent us.

But above all, Let us often call to mind the Example of our blessed Saviour, who refused the offer of all the Kingdoms of the *World*, and the Glory of them, when made to him upon unworthy Terms. From this great Example, we may learn to reject the greatest Honours and Preferments of the *World*, when they are inconsistent with the Glory of God and our own Salvation; *choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season.*

Moreover, to wean us from the *World*, let us often think of the vanity and vexation of Spirit, that attend all things under the Sun, together with the unconceivable Joy and Happiness that accompany the things above; make these things by Faith and Me-

ditation always present to you; this will raise you above all Allurements of the *World*, and in a great measure help you to overcome them; for *this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even your Faith*, 1 John 5. 4.

Finally Brethren, when ever you are assaulted by any of the Baits and Temptations of the *World*, call to mind your baptismal Engagement; remember that you are under a Vow to renounce and forsake them, and that you cannot now yield to them, without being false to your Saviour, and injurious to your own Soul.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XIII.

1 Pet. 2. 11. *Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly Lusts, which war against the Soul.*

HAving dispatched the Two first Enemies that we renounce in Baptism, *viz.* The Devil and the World, I come now to the

III. And that is the *Flesh, with all its sinful Lusts.* And this is the more dangerous, because 'tis an Enemy within us, that hath gotten the Possession, and so not so easily repulsed or vanquished. The Devil and the World are without us, their Assaults are visible, and may therefore be the better resisted and overcome; but this is a Traytor in our Bosom, that sets upon us unawares; its Darts are invisible, and wound without being seen. The two former work by this, which is ever too ready to joyn Issue with them, and to betray us into their Hands.

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This therefore is an Enemy that we muſt be more eſpecially armed againſt; to which I ſhall direct from the Words read, *Dearly Beloved, I beſeech you*, &c.

In the Verſes immediately foregoing, the Apoſtle minds us of that exceeding great Honour and Dignity, to which we are advanced by being Chriſtians; ſtiling us, Verſe 9. *A choſen Generation, a royal Prieſthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People.* And minding us, Verſe 10. *That tho we were once in the ſtate of Heathens, yet now we are the People of God; having obtained this Mercy, by being received into his Church and Favour.* And being thus highly honoured, he wills us not to do any thing unworthy of our ſelves, nor debaſe the Dignity of our holy Profeſſion. And becauſe the greateſt danger is from the Luſts of the Fleſh, he beſeeches us here, *as Strangers and Pilgrims, to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul.* In treating of which Words, I muſt ſhew,

Firſt, What are thoſe fleſhly Luſts we are to abſtain from.

Secondly, How we are to renounce or abſtain from them.

Thirdly, The Obligations that lie upon all Christians so to do.

1st Then, What are those sinful Lusts of the Flesh, that we are to renounce or abstain from? In Answer to which,

By Flesh here, we are to understand, not only that carnal Part or Mass of Flesh which we carry about us, but likewise all those Senses and animal Faculties that belong to it, and are common to us with other Creatures.

By the Lusts of the Flesh, we are to understand all the Desires, Affections, Motions or Appetites, of that fleshly Part, or proceeding from any of those Senses and Faculties that appertain to it; which Desires are commonly carried out after those Things that are most pleasing to this carnal Part; craving chiefly such, as may gratify any Sense or Faculty of it.

By the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, we are to understand the exorbitant and irregular Desires of the Flesh, whereby it affects what it should not, and is carried out after what is forbidden.

Before the Degeneracy or Fall of Mankind, these Desires and Affections of the Soul were all orderly and regular, placed upon right

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Objects, and kept within due Bounds; but since they are become very extravagant and disorderly; and 'till they are spiritualized, and brought under the managery of Reason and Religion, *are evil, only evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5.

Insomuch, that in this natural State Reason is over-born by vicious Inclinations, and led into Evil by a sensual Appetite; by which means the Affections are either set upon wrong and unwarrantable Objects, or if better placed, run into Inordinacy and Excess; whereby Men abuse and pervert what otherwise in the moderate Use was permitted unto them.

In short then, By the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, are meant all those extravagant Motions or Desires of the carnal Appetite, whereby being allured by some pleasing Baits or Suggestions, it inclines to, or fastens upon, some things which God hath forbidden, or else exceeds in the immoderate Use of what were otherwise lawful and permitted to them.

These are in general those fleshly Lusts, which we are here advised to abstain from: If you desire a more particular Account, St. *Paul* hath given a Catalogue of them, and reckoned them up to our hand, Gal. 5. 19, 20. *The*

Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murder, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like.

Where Adultery leads the Van, which is the Incontinence of married Persons, or the Violation of the Bond of Wedlock; this justly stands in the Front of this black List, it being the worst and foulest of all fleshly Lusts, and discovers a brutish and profligate Mind; for 'tis a Sinning against the Remedy appointed in this Case, and prevents the Course allowed to allay and extinguish such impure Flames.

Next to this follows *Fornication*, which is the Incontinence of single Persons, and making the Members of Christ to become the Members of an Harlot. Now, tho' this be not altogether so bad as the former, yet 'tis justly to be reckoned among the *sinful Lusts of the Flesh*, being a defiling and unhallowing of those Bodies, that ought to be kept as *Temples of the Holy Ghost*; and prostituting that to base and dirty Purposes, which should be consecrated and devoted to God's Service.

After

After this comes *Uncleanneſs*, by which is meant all Impurity of Mind, all vain and luſtful Thoughts and Deſires, together with thoſe lewd and unclean Practices, that were antiently uſed as ſacred Rites to the Idols and falſe Gods of the Heathens.

To this is added in the next place, *Laſciviouſneſs*, by which is meant all Wantonneſs of Behaviour, diſcovered either by Words Geſtures or Actions, all Delight in filthy and obſcene Communication, whether by ſpeaking it our ſelves, or hearing it from others. All theſe are to be reckoned and renounced among the *ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh*.

Next to this comes *Idolatry*, by which we are to underſtand all worſhipping of falſe Gods; and more eſpecially the paying thoſe forementioned lewd and obſcene Rites to them; to which may be added, the placing that Love, Delight and Confidence in any other thing, which is due to God only; as the covetous Man doth in *Mammon*, which in Scripture is ſtiled *Idolatry*.

To this is added *Witchcraft*, which is the having recourſe to Wizzards or Sorcerers, and aſcribing to them the Knowledge of paſt and future Things, which belongs to God only.

Moreover, all kinds of *Variance*, which imply some of the lower Degrees of Difference and Dissention; all *Hatred*, which rises somewhat higher, and betokens an evil Mind; *Wrath*, which goes higher still, and supposes Rancour and Malice, and end sometimes in Murther and Destruction. Yea, all manner of *Strife* and *Contention*, which make Men uneasy to themselves and others, are here reckoned among the *Lusts of the Flesh*.

Furthermore, *Emulations*, in the Original ζῆλοι, which signifies a false and counterfeit Zeal in Matters of Religion; *Seditions*, which imply Factions and Disturbance in the State; *Heresies*, which are Divisions and Disorders in the Church, are here truly numbered among the *Works of the Flesh*.

Next to these follow bitter *Envyings* and *Contentions*, the sad Effects of Divisions both in Church and State; which, however palliated and coloured over with Pretences of Religion, are the known and natural Consequents of these things.

Lastly, To bring up the Rear, comes *Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like*, which are the gross Abuses of God's Creatures, and the miserable Evils of a sensual and licentious Appetite.

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This is a brief Account of the *ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh*, which in our Baptiſm we renounce, and of which the Apoſtle declares, That they *who do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.* From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To ſhew how we are to renounce or abſtain from theſe fleſhly Luſts. And here we may Note,

1ſt, That there is an innocent and lawful Uſe of ſenſual Pleaſures, tending to the Refreſhment of human Nature, and to eaſe the Cares of human Life; ſo that theſe are not abſolutely to be renounced, but only when they become ſinful by Inordinacy and Exceſs.

2dly, We are to abſtain, not only from the outward Acts of thoſe Sins, but from the inward Motions and Deſires after them, hating the very Garment ſpotted with the Fleſh, and avoiding all the Occaſions and Appearances of Evil; 'tis not enough to abſtain from theſe fleſhly Luſts from a Principle of Shame or Fear of Puniſhment; for ſuch will commit all uncleanneſs with greedineſs, if they can but ſcape the Eye and Cenſure of the

World. But it must proceed from an inward Hatred and Detestation of them, not cherishing any unchast Hankerings or Desires, nor suffering vain Thoughts to lodge or harbour within us.

3dly, We must renounce *all* the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, not lopping off this or that Limb or Branch only, but laying the Ax to the very Root, and cutting down the whole Body of Sin. There must be no Indulgence given to any one fleshly Lust, nor must any vicious Inclinations reign in us; *For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness of Men*, Rom. 1. 18. *And whoso keepeth the whole Law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all*, Jam. 2. 10. One Breach in a Wall may let in the Enemy, and one Leak in a Ship may sink the whole Vessel: in like manner, one Lust unmortified may sink the Soul, and drown it in Destruction and Perdition. This Renunciation must be universal, extending to all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh; not sparing *Agag*, or cherishing a reserve of kindness for any beloved Lust; but breaking off Correspondence with all, even the most darling Vice, tho' it may be as dear to us as *a right Eye*, and we as loth to part with it, as with *a right Hand*, Mat. 5. 29, 30. Lastly,

Laſtly, Our renouncing theſe ſinful Luſts muſt be univerſal in reſpect of Time too; that is, we muſt ſo caſt them off, as not to turn to them any more; our being waſhed in the Waters of Baptiſm will be of no avail, if we *return with the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the Mire.* If we hope to receive the Benefits and Priviledges of Baptiſm, we muſt utterly abandon theſe fleſhly Luſts, and ſo bid adieu to them, as not to return again to Folly.

Having then ſuch *rich and precious Promiſes made to us in Jeſus Chriſt, let us* (as the Apoſtle directs) *cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.* Thus we ſee what the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh are, and how we are to renounce them. I proceed then,

Thirdly, To the Obligation that lies upon all Chriſtians ſo to do; and this is very ſtrong and indiſpenſable, ariſing,

1ſt, From the Precept and Command of God, who requires this from them; *This is the Will of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *even your Sanctification, that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in Sanctification and Honour,*

not

not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence, even as the Gentiles that know not God, 1 Theſ. 4. We find a ſtrict Charge laid upon us, to deny all *Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*; and elſewhere, *to put off, concerning the former Converſation, the old Man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful Luſts, and to be renewed in the Spirit of our Mind.* To this purpoſe are thoſe frequent Exhortations, *Not to live or walk after the Fleſh: To make no proviſion for it to fulfil the Luſts thereof: To mortify our earthly Members*, and the like. All which being the expreſs Commands of him, whom we are bound above all things to obey, muſt carry a ſtrong Obligation with them.

2dly, This Obligation is increaſed upon us from our own Promiſe; for at our entrance into the Church, we ſolemnly diſclaimed and abandoned all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh; we entred into a holy War, not only againſt the Devil and the World, but againſt this homebred Enemy the Fleſh, that wars againſt the Soul. Now all thoſe that have retained any Senſe of Religion or Honeſty, have ever thought themſelves bound by their Word, and no Tye hath been eſteemed ſo ſacred and obliging as that of a Vow; and conſequent-

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ly having ſolemnly engaged at our Baptiſm, to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, we ſtand obliged in Honour and Conſcience to obſerve and perform it.

Laſtly, Both the Deſign and Dignity of our Profeſſion obliges us to renounce the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh; for the end of it is to ſubdue and mortify our corrupt Affections, and it muſt be mightily diſhonourable for us to be led Captive by them. Chriſt hath called us out of the World to be a peculiar People, and therefore wills us to purify our ſelves, *even as he is pure.* Now as nothing can better adorn our high and holy Calling, than a chaſt Converſation coupled with Fear; ſo nothing can more blemiſh and beſpatter it, than a filthy and debauch'd Converſation. In a Word, without abandoning theſe ſinful Luſts, we can neither anſwer the End, nor obtain the Reward, of our Chriſtianity.

Wherefore, let me beſeech you, *Dearly Beloved, as Pilgrims and Strangers, to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul.*

If you need any farther Arguments to arm you againſt this inbred Foe, the Apoſtle minds us here of two weighty Motives to that end; the one taken from our State and

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Condition here in this Life, which is that of Strangers and Pilgrims, and so not to be taken up with these vile and brutish Satisfactions. The

Other, from the extream Danger and Dammage of them, *they war against the Soul.* A word or two of each: And,

First, Our State and Condition here in this World, which is that of Strangers and Pilgrims, requires us to abstain from fleshly Lusts. A Pilgrim, you know, will not take up in a strange Land, or be diverted from the Love and Business of his own Country, by any seeming Satisfaction he may meet with out of it; he is still passing on, and will not by the entertainment of an Inn, become unmindful of the Comforts and Happiness of his own Home, and therefore cannot be satisfied 'till he return to it.

Why, we are all Pilgrims and Strangers here in this World, we have here no abiding City, but seek one to come; our Country is elsewhere, and it must be very improper for us to take up with the sensual Pleasures and Delights of this World, when we belong to another, and daily marching and travelling towards it. Our Conversation (saith the

Apoſtle) or as 'tis in the Original, Our Citizenſhip or Abode is in Heaven, this World is only a tranſitory Paſſage to it: Let thoſe that belong to this World pleaſe themſelves if they can, in the carnal and ſenſual Satisfactions of it; as for us that are enfranchized and made free of a better, we are to keep on in our way to it, and not be delayed or diverted out of it by any of the ſly Inſinuations of *the World, the Fleſh or the Devil*; this we find the Patriarchs did, who confeſſed themſelves Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth, and thereby declared that they ſought and belonged to another Country, and therefore would not be inveagled with the Pleaſures of this: and we too muſt do the ſame, if we mean to follow them to the ſame Place.

But there is another and greater Argument yet to diſſwade us from theſe fleſhly Luſts; and that is taken from the,

Unſpeakable Miſchief and Dammage done by them, they *war againſt the Soul*. *Solomon* tells us, That he *that ſinneth againſt God wrongeth his own Soul*, Prov. St. *Paul*, *That he that committeth Fornication wrongeth his own Body*, 1 Cor. And St. *Peter*, *That ſenſual Luſts war againſt the Soul*. They war againſt the animal Soul or Life by ſhortening our Days, and bring-

bringing that rottenness into the Bones, that frequently occasions sudden and untimely Death.

They war against the rational and immortal Soul, and bring on it vast and sundry Inconveniences: As,

1st, They destroy the *Purity* of the Soul, and bring on it the foulest Pollution and Defilement.

2dly, They debase the *Honour and Dignity* of the Soul, by defacing the Image of God in it, and degrading it beneath the Beast that perisheth. They bring blindness and darkness into the Understanding, disorder into the Will and Affections, confusion and weakness into all the Faculties.

3dly, They war against the *Liberty* of the Soul, by bringing it into the basest and vilest Bondage.

4thly, They war against the *Peace* of the Soul, by filling it with perpetual Trouble and Anxiety.

Lastly, They war against the *eternal Happiness*

pineſs and Salvation of the Soul, by depriving it of the bleſſed Viſion and Enjoyment of God, and dooming it for ever to the wretched Society of the Devil and his Angels.

Theſe, and far greater Evils than can be expreſſed or conceived, are the miſerable Effects of this unhappy War, where theſe fleſhly Luſts prevail and domineer; which is ſufficient to arm us with the greateſt Courage and Reſolution againſt them. Thus we have ſeen the Three great Enemies of Chriſt and our own Salvation, *The Devil, the World and the Fleſh*, which we renounce in our Baptiſm, and muſt encounter in the whole courſe of our Lives ever after. By all which it appears,

How truly Chriſtianity is ſtiled a *Warfare*, where, when we enter upon it, we do as it were enter the Field, and muſt expect to be aſſaulted on every ſide. However, we have ſeen their Wiles and Temptations, and how we may be enabled to reſiſt and vanquiſh them; for greater is he that is for us, than they that are againſt us: So that if we fight manfully under his Banner, and continue his faithful Servants and Soldiers (as we have promiſed) to our Lives end, we ſhall be ſure to be Victorious, *and become more than Conquerours through Chriſt that loved us.*

DIS-

DISCOURSE XIV.

Mark. 1. 15. *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*

WE are yet upon the baptismal Covenant; where having shewed the Priviledges promised and conferred on God's part, I come to the Duties or Conditions required and promised on Ours, which were these three, Repentance, Faith and Obedience. The former teaches us what to forsake; which as our Catechism directs, is *The Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.* The second teaches us what to believe, namely, *All the Articles of our Christian Faith.* The third, what we are to do, *viz. To keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of our Life.*

Of the First, to wit, the Doctrine of Repentance, I have discoursed at large, shewing it to be a forsaking of all manner of Sin, by renouncing our three ghostly Enemies, the Devil, the World and the Flesh, who are daily

daily tempting and enticing us to it. I come now to the

Second Condition, promiſed and required on our part, to entitle us to the Priviledges of Baptiſm, and that is Faith; expreſſed in our Catechiſm, *By believing all the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith*: of which I ſhall treat from theſe words of St. *Mark*, *Believe the Goſpel.*

The Words are the firſt great Meſſage delivered to the World, upon our bleſſed Saviour's coming into it: St. *John* prepared for his coming by preaching of Repentance; *Repent* (ſaith he) *for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And immediately upon his coming, this other Branch was added to it, *Repent and believe the Goſpel.* In ſpeaking to which words, as they relate to the Catechiſm, I muſt ſhew,

Firſt, What we are to underſtand by the Goſpel, or the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith.

Secondly, What is meant by believing theſe Articles. And,

Thirdly, What by believing all the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith.

1ſt, Then, What are we to underſtand here by the Goſpel, or the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith? In Anſwer to which, *Goſpel*, is an old Saxon word, that ſignifies the ſame with *God's Word*; and denotes that divine Revelation that was made to the World, concerning the Salvation of Mankind by Jeſus Chriſt; 'twas but obſcurely revealed by *Moſes* and the Prophets under the Old Teſtament, but more fully and plainly by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the New.

The Law was given by *Moſes*, veiled with dark Types and Shadows; but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt, who unriddled thoſe Types, and made the Shadows vaniſh by exhibiting the Subſtance; for which Reaſon, Life and Immortality, which was before wrap'd in Darkneſs, is ſaid to be brought to Light by the Goſpel.

By the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, are meant the prime fundamental Truths of that divine Revelation, neceſſary to be known in order to Salvation: for tho' all the Parts and Paſſages of Holy Scripture be equally true, being dictated by the ſame infallible Spirit, yet they are not equally neceſſary; there are ſome leſs momentous or circumſtantial Things, of which Men may be ignorant without the hazzard of their Salvation. Now

Now those more weighty and substantial Truths, the Knowledge whereof is necessary to the happiness of our Souls, are what we here understand by the Articles of the Christian Faith: which great Truths being dispersed up and down in the Gospel, are briefly summed up to our hands, in that excellent Summary, known by the name of the *Apostle's Creed*. This St. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans* calls, *The Form of Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, *The one Faith*, Eph. 4. 5. in his Epistle to *Timothy*, *The Form of sound Words*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. St. *Jude* stiles it, *The Faith once delivered to the Saints*, Verse 3. the Author to the *Hebrews*, *The Profession of Faith*, Heb. 10. 23. In all which places there is an Allusion or Reference to the Apostle's Creed; the great fundamental Points whereof, making up and holding together the whole Body of Christian Divinity, are stiled the Joynts or Articles of the Christian Faith.

But what is it to believe these Articles? In Answer to which, To believe the Gospel or Articles of the Christian Faith, as 'tis here promised by every baptized Christian, implies these Two things;

First, The Assent of the Mind to the Truth of them. And,

Secondly, The Consent of the Will and Affections in Embracing and Acting according to them.

1st. I say, To believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, is firmly to Assent unto the Truth of them: and that because they are delivered by him that is Truth itself, attested by his Word that cannot lye, and confirmed by such Miracles that cannot deceive. And where these things concur, that is, where there is infallible Testimony and evident Proof, there it must be unreasonable to withhold the Assent. And since these things meet in the Articles of our Christian Faith, we are to have a firm Belief and Perswasion of the Truth of them.

We have not followed cunningly devised Fables, saith the Apostle, in what we delivered to you; *But we deliver to you, that which we also received, being spoken first by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by them that heard him*, Heb. 2. 3. *Prophesy came not* (saith St. Peter) *by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*,

2 Pet.

2 Pet. 1. 21. So that as all Scripture in general, ſo particularly the neceſſary Doctrines of Faith collected out of it, are given by Inſpiration of God and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, *that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Meaning, That theſe weighty and uſeful Truths are dictated by an infallible Spirit, and therefore to be received and believed by us. This is that Confeſſion of Faith in which we are required to continue ſtedfaſt; that Form of ſound Words, which we are to hold faſt without wavering, and not to be ſhaken by any from the Belief of it. In token hereof it is, that our Church requires us to be in the Poſture of ſtanding in Rehearſing of it, to ſignify our Reſolution of adhering and ſtanding to it.

So that all the Deiſts and Scepticks of our Age, who deride the Myſteries of the Goſpel, or deny the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, are guilty of a manifeſt Breach of their baptiſmal Vow, in letting go that Profeſſion of Faith which they promiſed to hold faſt, and calling in queſtion thoſe Truths which they engaged ſolemnly and conſtantly to believe. Such as theſe are truly Deſerters

and Renegadoes from the Faith, who instead of renouncing their Enemies, renounce their own Engagements by flying to those they promised to fight against, and forsaking him to whom they have vowed all Fidelity. And if the shame and danger of flying from our Colours be so great in our common Battles, what will be the Fate of those that desert their Saviour in this spiritual Warfare, and prove thus perfidious to the Captain of our Salvation? To answer then this part of our Vow, we must not stagger through Unbelief, but yield a firm and unshaken Assent to the Truths of the Gospel, and take heed of all doubting or disbelieving the Articles of our Christian Faith.

But this is not all, To believe these Articles, implies not barely an Assent to the Truth of them in our Mind, but,

2dly, the Consent of our Will and Affections to them, by receiving them into our Hearts, and suffering them to have a due Influence upon our Lives and Conversations. The Christian Religion is not barely a speculative Science, to entertain our Minds with barren and empty Notions; but 'tis a practical Art, that designs to better our Lives, and

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teach us how to order our Converſation aright; and when by Baptiſm we enter upon the Profeſſion of it, we enter upon a new Life, and engage to ſquare our Actions by the Rules of it. The Faith here promiſed, is not a dead ineffectual Faith, that reſts in a meer Aſſent and Speculation of divine Truths, but an operative Faith, that works by Love, and influences the Soul to all the Parts of a holy Life; theſe myſterious Truths are revealed not to ſatisfy our Curioſity, or to beget in us a vain Credulity, but to regulate our Practice and our Belief of them, is not ſo much indeed to make us wiſer, as better Chriſtians.

This S. *James* tells us at large, who asks, *What does it profit, my Brethren, if a Man ſay he hath Faith, and hath not Works, can ſuch a Faith ſave him?* Faith without Works is dead, being alone, and can that lead or bring any to eternal Life? This is no better than the Faith of Devils, who believe and tremble, and groan for ever under the Miſeries of an idle Belief without Practice, *James* 2.14,15,19

The Author to the *Hebrew*, in the 11th Chapter, tells us of the many great and good Works that proceeded from the Faith of *Abraham*, *Moſes*, and the other Patriarchs, what mighty things were atchieved by it,

and how great a Recompence of Reward they received by it.

Indeed, as a learned Divine hath well observed, 'We do not believe enough of any 'thing, until it lead us to act according to that 'Belief. The things that worldly Men believe, put them upon Actions agreeable to 'such Perswasions: The Merchant believes 'there are Jewels and rich Wares in foreign 'Lands, and he puts to Sea and seeks to purchase them; the Country man believes he 'shall reap, and therefore he sows; the Soldier believes he shall have Victory and Spoil, 'and therefore he fights; And shall the Christian alone believe and sit still, or do nothing towards it? Are not the Principles 'of Religion sure, the Hopes better, and the 'Gains infinitely greater than those of worldly Men? And is it not a shame, that their 'Faith should be so active and busy in smaller 'Matters, and ours so idle and sluggish in 'things that so vastly exceed them? So that the practical Atheist and debauched Persons, who may perhaps believe aright as to the Truth of Religion, are justly chargeable with the breach of this Vow, by not living or acting accordingly.

Thus

Thus we ſee what we are to underſtand by the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, *viz.* The neceſſary Points of Faith ſummed up in the Apoſtle's Creed; and likewiſe, what by believing theſe Articles, namely, Not barely aſſenting to them with our Underſtanding, but receiving them into our Hearts, and exerting the Power of them in our Lives and Converſations. From whence I proceed to conſider,

3dly, The Extent of our Belief, which we are told, is to reach to all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith; we are not to pick and chuſe, believing ſome and rejecting others; but our Faith muſt extend to all, for ſo we promiſed in our Baptiſm, to believe all the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith: the Reaſon whereof is plain; for,

Firſt, They have all the ſame Authority, being revealed by the ſame holy unerring Spirit. And,

Secondly, They all tend to the ſame End, even the Salvation of our Souls; and being all neceſſary to that end, we are to take no more nor no leſs into our Creed, but to ſtand

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to that Standard or Rule of Faith which the *Apostles* have left us.

But for the fuller Explication hereof, we must Note, that this Branch of our Vow obliges to all the Articles of our Christian Faith.

First, Extensive, that is, we must believe them all.

Secondly, Exclusive, that is, we must believe them and no more.

1st, I say, our Faith must extend to all these Articles; and that, as was before observed, because they are all grounded upon the same Authority, being all equally the Dictates of a divine infallible Spirit. Insomuch, that what St. *James* affirms concerning the Law, is true likewise of the Christian Faith; *he that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.* In like manner, he that rejects one Article is guilty of the whole; because, in disbelieving one, he contemns that Authority that revealed and requires all the rest. The *Apostles* had the holy Spirit sent to them, to lead them into all and nothing but Truth; and therefore what they delivered must be embraced as true, and counted worthy of all

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acceptation. By rejecting any part of our Creed, our Faith becomes maimed and imperfect, and may make us fall ſhort of Salvation.

In a Word, we engage here, not to ſhrink from the Confeſſion or Belief of any one Article handed down from the *Apoſtles*, or any one Truth contained in them.

2dly, Our believing all the *Articles of the Chriſtian Faith*, here implies, the Belief of thoſe and no other; we may not coin new Articles of Faith of our own making, nor yet receive any for current that are new-coined by others. Chriſt is the ſole Lord and Maſter of our Faith and Conſcience, and therefore we muſt not become the Servants of Men, and enſlaving our Minds to their new-invented Doctrines. The Phariſees were rebuked by our Saviour for their Teaching, for Doctrines or neceſſary points of Faith, the Commandments of Men, and laying heavy Burthens on other Mens Conſciences, which themſelves would not touch with the leaſt of their Fingers, *Mat.* 15. 9. & 23. 4. St. *Paul* declares, that if an Angel from Heaven ſhould preach any other Goſpel, or add any new Articles of Faith to thoſe we have received, we

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are to account him accurſed, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. where we find this weighty Caution twice repeated and inculcated upon us.

We may indeed, and ought, to obey ſome external and alterable Rules of Order and Decency, for the greater Reverence and Solemnity of publick Worſhip; but we may not receive any new points of Doctrine, as neceſſary to our Salvation, nor ſuffer doubtful Problems to advance into Articles of Faith. And therefore the new coined Articles of Purgatory, Tranſubſtantiation, and the like, invented by the Church of *Rome*, are groſs Impoſitions on the Faith of Chriſtians, and ought neither to be obtruded upon, or admitted by any.

Moreover, to believe it neceſſary to Salvation, to abſtain from ſome ſorts of Meats, or ſome indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in the Worſhip of God, to prohibit them as ſimply unlawful, and not to be uſed upon Peril of Damnation, are Additions to Religion, and making new Points of Faith. Such was theirs in the *Apoſtles* days, who ſaid, in indifferent Matters, *Touch not, taſte not, handle not*; and of the ſame kind is theirs in ours, who ſay, *Kneel not, uſe not a Form of Prayer, wear not ſuch a Garment*, and the like, which

which being no where forbidden, may not be believed or abſtained from as unlawful. Such Doctrines or Prohibitions as theſe, where they are urged upon our Belief or Practice, are groſs Infringements of Chriſtian Liberty, and unwarrantable Additions to the Chriſtian Faith; and conſequently this Branch of our Vow wills us not to liſten to, or be led away by them. Thus we ſee the Senſe of what is required and engaged by us, when we promiſe to believe all the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith; which is carefully to be obſerved by all that are baptized, upon Pain of forfeiting all the Benefits and Priviledges of Baptiſm. To this we have farther Encouragement,

Firſt, From the exceeding great Reward annexed to our keeping to the Chriſtian Faith. Our bleſſed Saviour, the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, aſſures us, *That he that believeth ſhall be ſaved*, Mark 16.16. meaning, that he ſhall partake of that great Salvation which he hath purchaſed and promiſed to all his faithful Followers. Hence we find St. *Paul* declaring of himſelf, *That he had fought the good fight*; which was his fulfilling of the firſt Part of his Vow, by warring againſt thoſe

those ghostly Enemies. *He had kept the Faith,* which was his performing this second Part of it, by believing all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and therefore, *henceforth* (saith he) *is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give me at the last day; and not to me only, but to all that by Faith look for his Appearance.*

Lastly, The Danger of deserting the Faith is no less dreadful and unexpressible; for our Saviour in the same place tells us, *That he that believeth not shall be damned*; where Hell is made the Portion of Unbelievers, and the hottest place of it is prepared for such as revolt from the Christian Faith.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XV.

Mat. 19. Lat. part of the 17th Verſe, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.*

I Diſcourſed the laſt time, of the Second Condition required and promiſed in the baptiſmal Covenant, which taught us what to believe, *viz. All the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.* I proceed now to the,

III. Condition required in it, which directs us what we are to do; and that is, *To keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the ſame all the Days of our Life.* Whereas the former gave us the great Rule of Faith to direct our Belief; ſo this inſtructs us in the great Rule of Life and Manners to regulate our Practice. Of this I ſhall treat at this time from theſe Words of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.*

The Words are part of an Anſwer to a Queſtion, put to our Saviour by a certain Man, who in the Verſe before the Text, came to him, and asked him, ſaying, *Good Maſter,*

what

what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal Life? To whom our Saviour replies in the Words read, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* To the same purpose our Catechism teaches us, *If we will enter into Life by the Door of Baptism, we must keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of our Life.*

For the Explication of this part of our Vow, we must enquire,

First, What is meant here by God's holy Will and Commandments.

Secondly, What by keeping his holy Will and Commandments.

Thirdly, What by walking in the same all the Days of our Life.

Fourthly, I must shew this to be a necessary Condition of Life and Salvation.

For the 1st, By God's holy Will, we are to understand his revealed Will, as tis made known to us, either by the Light of Nature, or by the Light of Scripture; for both these ways he hath discovered his Mind and Will

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unto Mankind. By the Light of Nature we are taught many great and important Truths; as, That there is a God, that he is to be worſhipped; that Right and Juſtice is to be done to all Men, and that we ſhould do to others as we would be done by our ſelves. Theſe and many other Principles of Religion are Engraven on our very Natures, and may be learnt by the plain deductions of common Reaſon. This is a good Rule as far as it reaches, and helps to direct us in many weighty Duties, both towards God and Man; indeed this was all the Rule the Gentile World had to walk by, for they *having no written Law, were* (as the *Apoſtle* tells us) *a Law unto themſelves, having the Law of God written in their Hearts; their Thoughts the mean while bearing witneſs, and their Conſcience accuſing or excuſing one another*, Rom. 2. For which reaſon they were ſaid to be left without Excuſe in Matters, wherein they acted contrary to this natural Light.

But where this was defective, God Almighty hath ſupplied it to the Chriſtian World by the Light of Scripture, he hath ſpoken to us in theſe latter Days by his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the World. This Son

of God who lay in the Bosom of the Father, hath revealed to us his whole Mind and Will; so that we are not left to the blind and uncertain Conduct of Nature, but we have a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed, as to a Light shining in a dark Place; he hath given us his Word, to be *a Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths*; by this he hath directed us how to walk, so as to please him and profit our selves. This is the holy Will of God.

By his Commandments, we are to understand, that Law which was first given by *Moses* on *Mount-Sinai*, and after enlarged and expounded by Christ on the Mount of *Olives*, in which he hath fully instructed us in our Duty, and given us Precepts, that far surpass, not only the dark Directions of Natural Light, but the obscure Revelation of *Moses*'s Law. In a word, we have there the most excellent Rules for the conduct of our Lives here, and to bring us to eternal Life and Happiness hereafter. These are his Commandments.

But 2dly, What is it to keep God's holy Will and Commandments? In Answer to which, 'Tis not barely to know the Will of God,

God, or to keep his Commandments in Remembrance, but to live in Obedience to the one, and Obſervation of the other, to make God's VVill the Guide of our Lives, and his Commandments the Rule of our Actions So that the great Duty here required and expected from us, is Obedience; which being the laſt and great Condition of the baptiſmal Covenant, muſt be unfolded to you. To which end, I ſhall as briefly as I can, explain the Nature and Qualifications of true Obedience. For the Nature of it; 'Tis the conforming our Lives and Actions to the VVill and VVays of God; for his VVill being the Meaſure and Standard of all Vertue and Goodneſs, is to be the Rule of our Lives and the Meaſure of our Obedience. Accordingly his Commandments teach us to demean our ſelves towards God with all Piety and Devotion, to put our whole Truſt in him, and to honour his holy Name and his VVord. Towards Men, they direct to all Acts of Juſtice, Honeſty and Charity; and likewiſe to all Sobriety, Meekneſs, Patience and Contentedneſs, towards our ſelves. Now when we lead our Lives by theſe Directions, and ſquare our Actions by theſe Rules, then do we ſhew our ſelves to be his Servants. So

that as we are to try the Soundneſs of our Doctrines by the Touchſtone of the Creed, ſo are we to examin the Goodneſs of our Doings by the Standard of the Commandments. But how is our Obedience to God's VVill and Commandments to be qualified to render it acceptable? VVhy, it muſt have three Qualifications to that end, *viz.* Sincerity, Integrity and Conſtancy.

Firſt, I ſay, Our Obedience muſt be accompanied with Sincerity; that is, it muſt be a true undiſſembled Service, void of all Hypocriſy or corrupt Deſigns in ſerving of him; to this end, it muſt proceed from an inward Principle of Love, inclining us to obey his Laws for his own ſake, and becauſe he commands them. VVhere this is wanting, Men do not obſerve God's VVill but their own, neither do they ſo much ſerve God as themſelves. True evangelical Obedience is hearty and ſincere, 'tis done as unto God, and from an inward Deſire to pleaſe him; 'tis not moved like an Engine, by the VVheels of Intereſt, nor acted by by-Ends or external Motives in his Service; but proceeds from a Principle within, which keeps good Men as much, yea, more to their Duty in

in ſecret, than in the ſight of Man. God cares not for a heartleſs Service, he hates thoſe unwilling Sacrifices that muſt be dragged to the Altar; his Call is, *My Son, give me thy Heart:* where this is, he accepts of weak and imperfect Services, but where this is wanting, the moſt grand and pompous Shews are an Abomination to him. God indeed does not forbid us all Love to our ſelves, nor will us to caſt off all Regard to our own Intereſt in his Service; No, he propoſes to us great Rewards, as Motives to Obedience; and the moſt eminent Saints have ever had an Eye to the Recompence of Reward. So that this alone cannot corrupt our Service or render our Obedience inſincere, 'tis the joyning the love of Sin with the ſerving of God, that corrupts the Duty, and 'tis the deſigning or preferring any temporal Ends in his Service, that wholly marrs the Offering; and therefore that we may obey and ſerve God acceptably, it muſt come from the Heart, and not be embaſed by ſiniſter and ſecular Ends.

Secondly, Another Qualification of true Obedience, is Integrity, which imports the Obedience of the whole Man to the whole

Law or VVill of God. It must be entire, in respect of the whole Man; that is, all the Faculties and Powers both of Soul and Body, are to be exercised and employed in his Service. Our blessed Saviour requires us, *To love the Lord our God, with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*; meaning, that those noble Faculties of our Understanding, VVill and Affections, should be all principally bent towards God, and that we are to Labour to know, love and serve him, above all things. Besides which, he wills us, *To love him with all our Strength*; that is, with all our bodily Powers, all the Members whereof are to be employed, not in the Service of Sin, but to be Instruments of Righteousness and Holiness unto God; our Mouths are to be opened to shew forth his Praise; our Tongues to be the Heralds to proclaim his Honour; our Hands are to be lifted up in daily Supplications unto God, and opened in charitable Dispositions to our distressed Neighbours; our Feet to be swift, not to shed Blood, but to run the Paths of God's Commandments. Thus must our Obedience be entire, in respect of the Subject, by being the Service of the whole Man. Moreover,

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It must be entire, in respect of the Object, by being extended to the whole Law and Will of God. *Then shall I not be ashamed* (saith the *Apostle*) *when I have respect to all thy Commandments*; 'tis the universality of our Obedience, that recommends it unto God, for that manifestly shews it to proceed from a Principle of Love and Sense of Duty to him: *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* are commended for *walking in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*, Luke 1.6. Indeed the Authority of God equally running through all his Laws, there can be no reason why we should observe one and despise another; unless it be from some by-end, and partiality to our selves, which is enough to debase our Service and render it unpleasing to him. He that said, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*; said also, *Thou shalt not Steal*; so that, tho' thou avoid Adultery, yet if thou Steal, thou art a Transgressor of the Law: Yea, St. *James* declares, *That if we keep the whole Law, and offend but in one point, we are guilty of all*; because such a partial Observance proceeds not from the true Motive of Obedience, which is the divine Authority, for that being stamped on all his Laws, would make them all current, and extend our Obedience as far as

that reaches, even to all the Commandments. So that our Obedience cannot be sincere unless it be universal. Again, It must be entire not only as to the Object, but as to the Time, it must hold out and extend to the whole Course of our Life; which is the,

Third Qualification of true Obedience, *viz. Constancy and Perseverance to the end.* And this will lead me to the

Next thing propounded to be spoken to; which was, To shew what is meant by *walking in the same all the Days of our Life.* By which, no more nor no less can be meant, Than that we do not faulter or tyre in our Christian Course, but persevere and hold out to the end; our Obedience must be constant as well as sincere, and continue all the Days of our Life. 'Tis not enough to serve and obey God now and then, by fits and starts, to be warm and zealous at some Times and in some Duties, and at other times to be cold and careless in his Service; this is an humorsome and hypocritical sort of Obedience, that finds no acceptance either with God or Man. To approve our selves Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants, our Service must be more uniform and constant, and our Obedience

dience last to our Lives end. We find God Almighty asking the Question, *If a righteous Man turn from his Righteousness and commit Iniquity, and do according to all that a wicked Man doth, shall he live?* And answers it himself, *No, by no means, all his former Righteousness shall not be mentioned, and in the Sin that he hath sinned, in that shall he die,* Ezek. 18. 24. 'Tis they that by patient continuing in well-doing seek for Glory and Immortality, *that shall have eternal Life,* Rom. 2. 6. And this will bring me to the

Last thing propounded, and that is to shew, That this sincere, uniform and constant Obedience, is one of the Terms of the baptismal Covenant, and a Condition of eternal Life and Salvation. When Christ commissioned his *Apostles* to *Baptize all Nations*, he bid them, *Teach them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. withall telling them, *That he who breaks the least of these Commandments, shall be called least, that is, none at all in the Kingdom of Heaven.* If we will enter into Life, our Saviour directs us to keep the Commandments; and our Catechism teaches, that to be Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must *keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and*

walk

walk in the same all the Days of our Life. The Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, *That Christ is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all and only those that obey him*, Heb. 5.9. which made himself say, *He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved*, Mat. 10. 22. and elsewhere, *Be faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* This Crown is promised unto none but such as continue stedfast in the Faith, and persevere to the last in well-doing; *For Tribulation and Anguish shall be rendered to every Soul that doth Evil, and they that hold not out to the end of the Race shall never obtain the Prize.* But here it may be asked, If this entire and constant Obedience be the necessary Condition of eternal Life, *Who can then be saved, since there is none that liveth and sinneth not?*

To which I Answer, That the rigorous Conditions of the old Covenant are by the Satisfaction and Intercession of Christ mitigated into milder and easier Terms in the New; and instead of that exact unsinning Obedience required in the former, we may be justified and saved by a sincere, tho' imperfect Obedience in the latter. The first Terms were, *Do this and live, and the Soul that sinneth, it shall die*; by which, the least

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Tranſgreſſion excluded us from all Hopes of Mercy, and conſigned us over to eternal Perdition; but now, by the Merits of our Saviour, Repentance and Amendment to the beſt of our Power entitles us to Mercy, and will inſtate us into the Kingdom of Heaven. God Almighty hath proclaimed himſelf to be *a God gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin*; and tho' he will not acquit the guilty that live in an obſtinate Violation of his Laws, yet he *ſheweth Mercy unto thouſands, in them that love him, and keep his Commandments*: He hath abated of the Rigor of the firſt Covenant, and accepts now of our hearty Deſires and Endeavours to pleaſe him in the Second: He allows for our Infirmities, and will not be extream to mark all that we have done amiſs; inſomuch, that tho' the Law denounces nothing but Death and a Curſe upon every Breach of it, yet we may now appeal from the Extremity of the Law, to the Equity of the Goſpel; for we are not (as the *Apoſtle* tells us) *under the Law, but under Grace*: we ſhall not ſuffer for involuntary Failings where our Hearts are upright, but may take Sanctuary in ſuch caſes from the Sentence of an incenſed Judge, in the Me-

Merits & Mercies of a Saviour. However, this is not intended to give any encouragement to Sin, but to relieve us from the heavy Burthen and Curse of it; *Shall we sin* (saith the *Apostle*) *that Grace may abound? No, God forbid!* This were to defeat the Ends both of the Law and the Gospel; and nothing creates greater and juster Fury than abused Mercy.

Thus I have briefly laid before you, both the Priviledges of the baptismal Covenant bestowed on God's part, whereby we are made *the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*; and likewise the Conditions to be performed on our part, to be made Partakers of them; which are, To renounce all our spiritual Enemies; to *believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith*; and, *to keep God's holy Will and Commandments all the Days of our Life.* I shall conclude with Two things by way of Application.

First, We may infer from hence, the Folly and Presumption of those, who expect the Blessings of the Covenant without performing the Conditions. A Covenant necessarily implies mutual Engagements; and in this, as God promises to be our God, and bestows many and great Blessings upon us, so we engage

gage to be his People, and to demean our ſelves accordingly; ſo that if we neglect our Duty to God, and lead wicked and unholy Lives, we forfeit his Favour, and can lay no claim to any of his Bleſſings: and yet ſome have greedily embraced a vain Opinion, that in this new Covenant, God hath taken all upon himſelf, and requires nothing, or as good as nothing, from us. They talk of nothing but abſolute Promiſes, and think it a diſparagement to the freedom of divine Grace, that any thing ſhould be expected from them; but only to believe, that is, to be confident that God will perform his part, tho' they do nothing on theirs; which (as one hath well obſerved) is an eaſy Condition indeed to Fools, but the hardeſt in the World to a wiſe Man. But be not deceived, God expects other things from us, namely, *Repentance and new Obedience*, for not every one that ſays, *Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*; and Baptiſm will never ſave us, without that newneſs of Life which is promiſed in it.

Wherefore, Laſtly, As we hope for Mercy and Salvation by Chriſt, let us perform the Conditions on our part, by forſaking of Sin, and living in Obedience to God's Laws; let us make his holy Will and Commandments the Rule of our Actions and Walk. DIS-

DISCOURSE XVI.

Psal. 66. Lat. part 13th Verse. *I will pay thee my Vows.*

HAving finished the Three first Questions and Answers of the Catechism, containing both the Priviledges and the Conditions of the baptismal Covenant; I shall go on in this, to the.

IV. Question and Answer, contained in these Words,

Dost thou think that thou are bound to believe and do as they have promised for thee? To which the Answer is.

Yes verily, and by God's help so I will, and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of Salvation through Jesus Christ; and I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the same to my Lifes end.

In this Question, the Child that was baptized in his Infancy, is asked in his proper Years, concerning his Sense of that Vow that was made by others in his behalf, and whether he takes himself to be bound by it.

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In Answer to which, Three things are returned by him.

First, A solemn Recognition of the Vow, owning the Obligation of it, together with a Promise and Resolution (by God's help) of performing it, in those Words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.*

Secondly, A grateful Acknowledgment and Commemoration of the invaluable Blessings received thereby, in those Words, *And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this State,* &c.

Thirdly, An affectionate Prayer unto God, for his Grace and Assistance, to persevere in it to the last, in those Words, *And I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the same to my Lifes end.* These being all weighty and important Matters, must be particularly handled. I begin,

1st, With the solemn Recognition made by Children in their riper Years, of that baptismal Vow, that was entered into by others in their behalf in their Infancy; in which they own the Obligation, and declare their Re-

Resolution of performing it, in those Words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will.* Where the Word, *verily*, represents the Purity, and, *by God's help*, the Piety of their Intention. Of this I shall treat at this time from these Words of the *Psalmist*, *I will pay thee my Vows.* For the better handling whereof, I must enquire,

First, Into the Nature of a Vow, and shew what it is.

Secondly, I must shew the Obligation or binding Force of it.

Thirdly, I shall apply both to our baptismal Vow. For the

1st, To understand the Nature of a Vow, you must Note, that all Engagements are made either to God or Men: an Engagement made to Man, is properly called a Promise, which if it be under Hand and Seal, and attested by the Witness of Men, is stiled a Bond, if confirmed by calling in God to Witness, it is truly an Oath; but an Engagement made to God as the Party, is properly a Vow; which may be defined to be a religious Act, whereby a Man engages himself unto God,

to perform ſomething that is Lawful and Honeſt; where 'tis ſtiled a religious Act, becauſe 'tis made to God, and is part of that Homage and Service we owe to him. We find in the holy Scriptures, many Commands and Directions about Vows, when they are to be made, and how to be paid. *David* bids us to vow unto the Lord, and to take care to pay it, *Pſal.* 6 11. and *Solomon* wills not to defer the Payment of them, *Eccleſ.* 5. A Vow is indeed an Acknowledgment of the Power and Goodneſs of God; they are directed to him as the Party, they tend to his Glory, and proceed from a Senſe of that Homage and Duty we owe him, and muſt therefore be a religious Act. Next,

'Tis ſaid to be a religious Act, in which we engage our ſelves unto God, and this diſtinguiſhes it both from a Promiſe and an Oath; for a Promiſe is made to Men and one another, but a Vow is made only unto God; and in an Oath God is called in as a Witneſs, but in a Vow God is made a Party; we ſwear by him, but we vow to him. Moreover,

'Tis added, That in a Vow we engage unto God ſomething that is Lawful and Honeſt; this ſhews us the Matter of a Vow, which being directed unto God, muſt be al-

ways something that is both Lawful and Laudable. Nothing that is Sinful or Trivial is to be vowed to him, for a Vow tyes always to Performance, and therefore the Matter of it must be such, as may be lawfully and fitly done. From the Explication of the Nature, I proceed,

2dly, To consider, what is more to our purpose, the Obligation of a Vow; and this is of all things the most sacred and inviolable, because 'tis immediately made unto God. A Promise made to Men obliges to Performance, by virtue of the Command of God; an Oath carries a higher Obligation, by reason of the Testimony of God, which is called in to back it; but a Vow hath the highest Obligation of all, because God is immediately concerned in it, and 'tis particularly directed to himself; to falsify with Men is a vile piece of Fraud and Deceit, but to prove false to our Maker is the very heighth of Impiety; and therefore we find this Bond of a Vow and an Oath too, tyed most strictly upon us by God himself, Numb. 30. 2. *If a Man vow a Vow unto the Lord, or swear an Oath to bind his Soul with a Bond, he shall not break his Word, he shall do according to all that pro-*

proceeded out of his Mouth. Where God Almighty lays a ſtrict Obligation on all Men to perform their Vows, he hath made it a Bond that is not to be broken, and hath tyed our Heart and our Hands to make good all that thus comes out of our Mouth. Yea, we find not only many ſtrict Precepts to convince us of the Duty, but many pious Examples too in ſacred Writ, to excite our Imitation. *Solomon* bids us to *vow unto the Lord, and not to defer to pay it*, Eccleſ. 5. *David* wills us to *offer unto God Thankſgivings, and to pay our Vows unto the Lord*, Pſal. 50. And for himſelf, he tells us his Reſolution in the Text, of *paying his Vows unto the Lord*; and elſewhere, *I will pay my Vows in the ſight of all that fear him*, Pſal. 22. *Jonah* declares, *All that I have vowed will I pay unto the Lord*, Jonah 2. 9. and great reaſon for it too, for a Vow lays a Debt upon every one that makes it, and natural Juſtice as well as Gratitude very ſtrongly obliges them to pay it: But if we add to this, the great Benefit that accrews from the obſerving this Act of Juſtice, together with the extream Danger of the contrary, it will appear to be, not only the greateſt Falſhood, but the groſſeſt Folly to with-hold it. And this will lead me to conſider,

3dly, The Obligation of the baptismal Vow, together with the Recognition, that the baptized Party is here taught to make of it. This is that solemn Engagement we all entered into at our entrance upon Christianity, which we are all to mind and make good in the whole Course of our Lives: 'Tis that sacred Bond whereby we have bound our selves unto God, which we are not to break or unloose, but *to do according to all that hath proceeded out of our Mouth.* And here we may observe,

First, The great Goodness of God in accepting the Vow and Stipulation of others in the behalf of Infants, before they are able to do it for themselves. To be in Covenant with God, is the sole foundation of all our Happiness; for thereby alone, *God becomes our God, and we become his People*; which is that which only entitles us to his Favour and the Mercies of the Gospel. Now that Children might not be excluded out of this Covenant, or deprived of the Priviledges of it, for their Inability to promise for themselves the Conditions required in it, God is graciously pleased to accept the Engagement of

others

others in their ſtead, and to admit them into the Church, upon the Faith of their Parents and the Promiſes of their Sureties. This is an Inſtance of his fatherly Care and Tenderneſs to poor Infants, to conſider their Impotence, and to aſſiſt their Weakneſs, and to receive them to Favour, upon a vicarious Stipulation, till they are able to renew and make one of their own. Out of the Church there is ordinarily no Salvation, and therefore that Infants may be put into the way that leads to it, they are received into it by others undertaking that for them, which they cannot do for themſelves; by which means they are taken into the Church before they leave the World, and we may preſume of their Salvation, tho' they die in their Infancy; which is no ſmall Security to Children, and may be no ſmall Comfort to their Parents.

But tho' the Mercy of God allows this to be done for them in their Infancy, to render them capable of Admiſſion into the Covenant, yet when they grow up to Years of Underſtanding, they are to undertake that in their own Perſons, which others engaged in their behalf: for tho' he diſpenſe with ſome impoſſible Terms while they remain ſo, and will not exact from them what is not in their

Power to perform; yet as soon as they become possible, that is, when they come to Years of Discretion, they justly may, and are expected from them. And this will lead me to observe,

Secondly, The Wisdom and Piety of the Church, in exacting this Recognition from them, and bringing Children to take that upon themselves in their riper Years, which others promised for them in their Infancy. In this Question of the Catechism, which every baptized Child is required to learn and repeat in the Church, 'tis asked, *Dost thou think that thou art bound to believe and do as thy Sureties promised for thee?* To which they are taught to Answer, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will* Where, as the Church in God's stead exacts this Acknowledgment from them, so do they in the Presence of God and the Congregation, publickly own and declare their Assent and Consent to it; which must lay a mighty Obligation upon them ever after, to observe and perform the Conditions of this baptismal Covenant.

Indeed, before and without this Vow, we all stand obliged by our Creation, to love, honour and obey our Maker, but yet this solemn

ſolemn Vow tyes the Obligation the ſtronger upon us, and this publick Acknowledgment of it faſtens it yet more, and makes it a threefold Cord, which *Solomon* tells us, *is not eaſily broken.* This is a plain Inſtance of the Church's great Care for the Salvation and Happineſs of all its Members; not only receiving them to all the Priviledges of the new Covenant, but likewiſe letting them know the Duties and Conditions annexed to them, requiring their Aſſent and Conſent to them, and by all good Means, faſtening the Obſervance and Obligation upon them.

Moreover, this ſhould engage Parents, not only to teach their Children the Catechiſm, but to bring them to ſay it before the Miniſter, that they may make this open and free Acknowledgment of their Vow for the good Influence it may have upon their Lives; and Parents ſhould often put their Children in mind of this publick Recognition, which may perhaps prove a Spur to Vertue, and a Curb from many a Vice.

But this is not all, for the more effectual performance of this Vow, Children are here taught,

Thirdly, To declare their Purpose and Resolution of keeping it; The Words, *yes verily*, declare their owning and acknowledging the Obligation; and the following Words, *by God's help so I will*, publish their Resolution of observing it: And indeed this is that which clinches the Nail, and drives home the Obligation upon them; for the bare owning or promising a thing is nothing without acting accordingly; 'Tis not enough to acknowledge, that we are bound to believe and do what others have promised for us, unless we add our Resolution, and set about the doing of it, saying with *Joshua*, that whatever others do, *we will serve the Lord*, Joshua 24. 15.

By this we learn, that 'tis Action alone that adorns and crowns our Profession; if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them: 'tis not saying or promising, but doing only, that brings us to Happiness; *Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision* (saith the Apostle) *availeth any thing, but a new Creature*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. 'Tis Newness of Life and Obedience that gives all the Efficacy to Baptism, and procures to us the Blessings of it; and therefore our Church directs Children

dren to joyn good Purpoſes and Reſolutions with their Acknowledgments, and to confirm their Promiſes by ſuitable Practices; without this, the moſt ſolemn Vows will prove rather Aggravations of our Sin, than the Inſtruments of Holineſs, and conſequently will tend more to encreaſe our Miſery, than add to our Happineſs; *Better is it* (ſaith *Solomon*) *that thou ſhouldſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldſt vow and not pay*, Eccleſ. 5. 5. 'Tis a leſs fault not to vow at all, than having vowed, not to perform, the one being a neglect, the other a contempt, of the divine Majeſty; and as nothing ſinks deeper than Contempt, ſo nothing can draw after it a heavier Judgment, than the Violation of a Vow.

For this reaſon it is, that our Church exacts from all baptized Perſons this ſolemn owning of their Vow, and likewiſe tacks to it a publick Declaration of their Will and Purpoſe to obſerve it; for when they are asked, Whether they take themſelves bound by the baptiſmal Vow, to act according to it? they are bid to reply, Yes verily, and by God's help ſo they will. Where,

Laſtly, They are directed to the beſt way and means to enable them to perform it; and that

that is, by imploring of God's help; *by God's help so I will*: this is neceſſary to be invoked in all our daily and common Affairs, but much more in the great and weighty Matters of Religion. We muſt be always ſenſible of our own Inability to help our ſelves, and live in a conſtant dependance upon the Aid and Aſſiſtance of our Maker; this way we may rationally expect his Favour and Bleſſing, becauſe he hath directed us to it, and our own Imbecillity and Weakneſs requires it; but to truſt to our own Strength, is to rely upon a broken Reed, that will not only fail our Expectations, but pierce us too with many Sorrows. God Almighty leaves thoſe to themſelves that depend upon their own Strength, by which means they fall into many Enormities, and meet with nothing but Diſappointment and a Curſe; but he delights to bleſs and aſſiſt thoſe that call and depend upon him, and hath promiſed never to leave or forſake ſuch, as in an humble performance of their Duty put their truſt in him. And therefore we find St. *James* blaming thoſe who ſpake too confidently of themſelves in the ſmalleſt Matters, Jam. 4. 13, 14. *Go to now, ye that ſay, To day or to morrow, we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a Year, and buy,*

and

and ſell, and get Gain; adviſing them to ſay rather, *if the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this or that.* Where he ſhews both the folly and the danger of neglecting God, and truſting to our ſelves in the ſlighteſt things. Suitable hereunto, our Church teaches Children to know whereall their ſtrength lies, and to whom they ought to have recourſe for it in all, but eſpecially in the great Concerns of their Souls; directing them to ſay, *by God's help ſo I will.*

To Conclude this Point, Let us frequently call to mind what was done and promiſed for us in our Baptiſm, and as we have ſince owned, ſo let us ſtill endeavour to anſwer the Obligation, by *denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and living righteouſly, ſoberly and godly, in this preſent World*; without this, we deny the Faith, and are worſe than Infidels, and inſtead of renouncing the Devil and all his Works, ſhall renounce Chriſt and all his Religion; and muſt neceſſarily forfeit all the Benefits of Baptiſm. Yea, without leading a holy Life, we ſhall be found Covenant-breakers, and guilty of the Violation of the moſt ſolemn and ſacred Vows; and thereby incur the Puniſhment, not only of faithleſs Ser-

Servants, but false and perfidious Renegadoes. To prevent which,

Let us remember, that what was done for us in our Infancy, in our Name, and for our Benefit, lies upon us after to perform: 'Tis a Rule in Law and Equity, what a Man doth by another, is to be reckoned as done by himself; if I depute another to seal a Bond for me, his Act bindeth me as fast, as if it were done immediately by my self. A learned Catechist hath truly observed, *That a Stipulation of others for an Infant, where it is to his Benefit, bindeth not only in the Gifts, but in the annexed Duties; if a Child have a Hand to take a beneficial Lease, he must find a Hand to pay the Rent and perform the Covenants, without which he justly forfeits it.*

This is our Case, we are put in a capacity of Heaven's vast and unspeakable Benefits, by the Engagements of others in our behalf, these now lie upon us to perform, in which if we perform our part, we cannot fail to receive them; otherwise, if we neglect it, 'twill be our folly as well as misery to go without them; especially having often owned and recognized the Obligation.

In a Word, Having made, and frequently renewed those Vows of Repentance and new Obe-

Obedience, let us be all mindful of them, and ſay with *David*, *I will perform my Vows.* 'Twas an atheiſtical Speech of Him, who affirmed it beneath him to be fettered by a Promiſe, or made a ſlave to his Word; this falls ſhort of the common Honeſty of the Heathens, who ever held Vows and Promiſes to be ſacred, and have been careful to obſerve them, tho' with the hazzard of their Lives. Religion teaches us not to fail of our Promiſes, tho' it be to our own hurt; How much more ought we to obſerve this, which tends ſo much to our great good? always ſaying, as our Church here hath taught us, *Yes verily, and by God's help ſo I will.*

DIS-

DISCOURSE XVII.

Rom. 7. 25. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I Have spoken of that solemn Recognition or Renewal of the Baptismal Vow, which every baptized Person is called upon to make, when he comes to Years of Understanding, in those Words, *Yes verily, and by God's help so I will*; where he owns himself bound by what others engaged for him, and declares his Purpose and Resolution to perform it. The better to enable him hereunto, the Church directs him,

Secondly, To make a thankful Acknowledgment unto God, of that happy State he is hereby called to, in those Words, *And I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*

Of this, I shall treat at this time, from these Words of St. *Paul*, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* In the Epistle to the Co-

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rinthians, he thanks God for *the Grace given to us by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 1. 4. in his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, for *Grace to enable him to the Work whereunto he was called*; all which amount to a grateful Commemoration of the Mercies and Bleſſings conveyed to us by our Baptiſm.

In explaining then this Branch of the Catechiſm, I muſt conſider,

Firſt, The Duty of Thankfulneſs, together with the Object of it, in thoſe Words, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father.*

Secondly, The particular Matter, for which this Thanks is directed to be paid, and that is, for his *calling us to this ſtate of Salvation.*

Thirdly, The Means by which this Mercy is obtained, and that is, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.* I begin with,

The Duty of Thankfulneſs, together with the Object to whom it is to be paid, *I heartily thank our heavenly Father.*

Thankfulneſs in general, is a grateful Senſe of Benefits received: it includes in it ſundry Acts and outward Expreſſions, of which,

David,

David, that great Master of Thanksgivings, hath given us many Precepts, and likewise set before us an excellent Example. I shall mention some of them; as,

1st, Thankfulness implies the frequent considering, remembering, and calling to mind of Benefits received; *Whoso is wise, will consider these things*, saith the *Psalmist*. For himself, he saith, *I will remember thy Wonders of old, and will meditate of all thy Works*, Psalm 77. 11. 12. Indeed, where the Mind is possessed with a grateful Sense of any Favour or Benefit, it will necessarily engage the Thoughts to consider it; 'twill make us faithfully to retain, and frequently recollect the Loving-kindness: he that slightly regards, or easily forgets a Benefit, can by no means be reckoned a grateful Person. And therefore we find the Israelites sharply rebuked, for not considering the Works of the Lord, and forgetting the Wonders he had done for them; *They remembered not his Hand* (saith the *Psalmist*) *nor the Day when he delivered them from their Enemies*, Psal. 78. 11, 42. *Yea, of the Rock that begat them, they were unmindful, and forgat the God that formed them*, Deut. 32. 18. Some Mens Memories, like the Water, bear

up

up light and trivial Matters, whilſt weighty Things ſink to the bottom, and are loſt in Oblivion.

Ariſtotle being asked, what ſooneſt grows old, anſwered, *Thanks*; and another tells us, *That no ſooner is the Courteſy born, but the Reſentment of it dies.* This is a vile, and yet too common a piece of Ingratitude, to let even the Mercies of God to paſs away unobſerved, and the Senſe of them ſink into utter forgetfulneſs. To prevent which, let us often refreſh our Memories with the Remembrance of the divine Goodneſs, and call upon our Souls in the Words of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.*

2dly, Thankfulneſs implies, not only the Remembrance, but a due Eſteem and Valuation of Benefits. A Man may remember a thing, and yet think but ſlightly of it; and he that doth ſo, can never be truly thankful: for according to the Opinion or Eſteem we have of Benefits, ſuch will our Gratitude be; he that knows not the Value of a Pearl or a Diamond, will give little or no Thanks for it; yea, he he will be apt to deſpiſe it, and with the Cock in the Fable,

will prefer a Barly-corn before a Jewel. If we set none, or a low Price, upon the Mercies of God, our Gratitude will be mean and despicable; and therefore we find *David*, the great Pattern of Gratitude, still magnifying the Mercies of God, and enhancing the Value of all his Blessings; *I will praise the Lord* (saith he) *for his Mercy is great, his Truth reacheth unto the Heavens, and his Faithfulness unto the Clouds*, Psal. 108. 3, 4. And elsewhere, *The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have any Pleasure therein*, Psal. 111. 2. Indeed, the Mercies of God are so great, that we cannot set any Value upon them, without undervaluing them; their Dimensions are larger than our Comprehension, and therefore, instead of measuring them, we are, with our devout Thanksgiver, to break out frequently into Wonder and Astonishment, saying with him, *O Lord our Governour, how excellent is thy Name in all the World?*

3dly, Thankfulness implies farther, a due Acknowledgment of Favours, and the Obligation that results from them. This is such a known piece of Gratitude, that they who neglect it, are by all Men judged to be highly

ly Ungrateful; he that cannot find a Tongue to acknowledge, what others find a Hand to reach out to him, juſtly forfeits all farther Title to Favour, and may be truly branded with the infamous Mark of Ingratitude. The leaſt Homage we can pay to Almighty God, is, to acknowledge his Favours; and where there is a thankful Heart, it will appear in thoſe Fruits of the Lips: *I have not hid thy Righteouſneſs in my Heart* (ſaith *David*) *my Talk hath been of thy Faithfulneſs and thy Salvation*; *I have not concealed thy Lovingkindneſs and Truth from the great Congregation*, Pſal. 40. 10. *This will pleaſe the Lord* (ſaith he) *better than an Ox or a Bullock, that hath Horns and Hoofs.* The Calves of the Lips are more acceptable to him, than all the Calves in the Stall; and a Mouth opened to ſhew forth his Praiſe, is more pleaſing than Sacrifices or Burnt-Offerings.

Laſtly, Thankfulneſs implies all poſſible Endeavours of Requital and Satisfaction. Hence, Gratitude hath been ever reckoned a Branch of natural Juſtice, for every Benefit lays a Debt upon us, which Gratitude requires to repay; *What ſhall I render unto the Lord* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *for all his Benefits?* And

the ſame is the Language of every thankful Heart, which is ever willing to make all the Returns it can to the divine Goodneſs. And becauſe the Mercies of God exceed all Requital, he reſolves with *David*, *to take the Cup of Salvation, and to call upon the Name of the Lord*; but above all, *to pay his Vows in the preſence of all his People, and declare his willingneſs to ſerve and exalt him*, Pſal. 116. 12, 13, 14.

Thus we ſee the Nature of Thankfulneſs, or what is implied in the Vertue of Gratitude, the Object whereof, our Catechiſm here tells us, is our heavenly Father; *I heartily thank our heavenly Father*. Tho' ſome ſorts and degrees of Thanks may be given unto Men, as the Inſtruments of divine Providence, and the immediate Agents or Occaſions of ſome Good to us, yet our primary and principal Thanks is due to God only, who gives them all the Power or opportunity of doing Good, either to themſelves or others; and therefore, *Not unto us* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*) *not unto us, but to thy Name be all the Praiſe.*

But what is the particular Mercy or Bleſſing, for which we are here directed to pay our Tribute of Thankſgiving? That is the Second thing to be ſpoken to, which ſhews, that

that we are heartily to *thank our heavenly Father, for calling us into this ſtate of Salvation.*

By this ſtate of Salvation here, we are to underſtand that happy Condition, into which we are received by our Baptiſm; by Vertue whereof, being admitted into Covenant with God, we are put into a ſafe way of Salvation, and cannot miſs of it, upon performing the Conditions required in it. Before this our reception into the Church, we were in a ſtate of Enmity and Alienation from God, being Strangers from the Covenant of Promiſe without God, and without Chriſt, and ſo without Hope in the World; in this forlorn Eſtate we muſt have all periſhed without remedy, being under the Wrath of God, and the heavy Sentence of eternal Damnation: But by the Grace and Mercy of this ſecond Covenant, the firſt Covenant of Works was cancelled, the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was againſt us, was blotted out, and we reſtored to this ſtate of Salvation.

This is the Mercy, for which we are directed, heartily to *thank our heavenly Father*; who had Compaſſion on our miſerable and helpleſs Eſtate, and employed both his Wiſdom and Goodneſs to reſcue us from it; yea, he hath not only turned away his Wrath,

received us into Favour, and put us into a Condition, if we please our selves, to be made eternally happy. This is that state of Salvation, into which we are all admitted at our entrance upon Christianity, the Conditions whereof, are not only easy and rational, but naturally qualifying, and preparatory thereunto, as hath been in some Measure shewed already, and will hereafter more fully appear.

That this is worth our most hearty Thanks to our heavenly Father, will be obvious to any, that will but seriously consider, either the greatness of the Miseries we are hereby delivered from, or the greatness of the Mercies we are hereby restored to; both which are too great to be conceived, and much more to be expressed, by us.

This happy Translation then from Woe to Bliss, yea, from Death to Life, deserves and calls for our greatest Thankfulness, which must be expressed too in all the forementioned Acts of Gratitude. As,

First, We are frequently to entertain our selves with the Thoughts of this unmerited Love of our heavenly Father, and make it a part of our daily Meditation; for when we had

had juſtly forfeited his Favour, and became Enemies to him by evil Works, he was pleaſed to be reconciled unto us, and becauſe we could not effect this of our ſelves, he thought fit to contrive for us, the means of our Reconciliation: this is never to be forgotten by us, but we are ſtill to have this his great Goodneſs in remembrance.

Next, We are not only to remember, but to ſet a high Price and Value upon this ineſtimable Favour. To be tranſlated from a ſtate of Death and Damnation, to which we were doom'd by the firſt Covenant, to a ſtate of Life and Salvation, to which we are reſtored by the ſecond, is a Mercy never enough to be valued by us. A redeemed Captive highly prizeth his Liberty, and a condemned Traytor is tranſported with Joy at the News of a Pardon; theſe are poor Reſemblances of a deliverance from eternal Death, to everlaſting Life, and faintly ſet forth our Tranſlation from a miſerable Bondage to Sin and Satan, to the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; which therefore require our higheſt Eſteem and our utmoſt Thanks. To this we are to add moreover,

Our frequent Acknowledgments of these signal Acts of the divine Goodness. Our Catechism here teaches every one to own his invaluable Priviledge, of being called to this state of Salvation, without which we had for ever remained miserable; and being a Mercy as much beyond our Power, as above our Merits, calls for our loudest Praises and Thanksgivings: a grateful Sense whereof, ought not only to live in our Hearts, but to discover it self in our Lips; often saying with the *Psalmist, Oh, that Men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men!*

Lastly, We should express our Thanks to our heavenly Father, by making all the Returns we can for his unspeakable Goodness. Now because our Righteousness extendeth not to him, nor can our highest Praises make any the least Addition to his essential Glory, therefore he is pleased to accept of our hearty Desires of serving him. To Obey, is better than Sacrifice, and no Incense is so savory in his Nostrils, as that which comes from a broken and contrite Heart; *Whoso offereth me Praise* (saith God) *he honoureth me, and to him*

him that ordereth his Converſation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God.

But how is this great Mercy obtained for us? That our

Third Particular will tell us, was through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour; *I heartily thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me to this ſtate of Salvation, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.* Now this is owing to Jeſus Chriſt upon a double account,

1ſt, Becauſe 'twas purchaſed for us by his Merits. And,

2dly, 'Tis granted to us by his Mediation.

Firſt, I ſay, we are called to this ſtate of Salvation through Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe he alone by his Merits purchaſed it for us. The breach of the firſt Covenant rendred all Mankind guilty before God, by means whereof, we all come into the World Children of Wrath and Diſobedience, and doom'd to a ſtate of eternal Perdition. But God Almighty took pity on our Condition, and found

found out a Remedy for us, when we could neither think of, or effect any for our selves; and that was, by sending his Son to die for us, whose Blood was of Value sufficient to Attone for the Sins of the whole World; by this, he not only satisfy'd divine Justice, but merited a new and better Covenant, into which we are entered by Baptism, the Seal of it; by receiving whereof, we are here said to be called to a state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ, who both merited the Priviledge, and instituted the Rite of Initiation into it.

Secondly, This state of Salvation was not only purchased by the Merits, but granted by the Mediation, of Jesus Christ; and so we may be truly said to be called to it, in and through him. There is one Mediator (saith the Apostle) between God and Man, *The Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. By his precious Blood-sheding, he obtained milder and easier Terms for us; and having fulfilled the first Covenant in his own Person, he did away that, and established the Second; for which reason he is said to be the Mediator of a better Covenant,

Covenant, which is eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes, *Heb.* 8. 6.

In a Word, As none was ſo proper to intercede for us with the Father, as his own Son, who likewiſe took our Nature to Attone for our Sins, and was in all things (Sin only excepted) made like unto us; ſo none but he was ſufficient to effect it, who by the Greatneſs and Divinity of his Perſon was alone able to pacify the divine Anger, and procure Peace and Reconciliation for us.

By which we ſee, not only infinite Goodneſs, but infinite Wiſdom too, in the Contrivance of Man's Recovery to this State of Salvation; which being effected only by the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

Upon the whole then, We may behold infinite Reaſon to thank, not only God the Father for contriving, but God the Son too for undertaking and accompliſhing, the Work of Man's Redemption. God ſo loved the World (ſaith the Apoſtle) that he gave his only begotten Son; and his only begotten Son ſo loved the World, that he gave himſelf;

ſelf; *that whoſoever believeth on him, ſhould not periſh, but obtain eternal Life*, 1 John.

Hereby he hath obtained eternal Redemption for us, and is become the Author of eternal Salvation, upon milder Terms than it could be had before; perfect and unſinning Obedience, which was out of our Power, being exchanged for Sincerity, and doing our Utmoſt; and this too ſecured to us by the Word and Promiſe of him, who is Truth it ſelf; and hath thereby bound himſelf by Contract and Agreement, to do that for us, which otherwiſe we could never claim or expect. Yea, the Apoſtle tells us, *That God willing more abundantly to ſhew to the Heirs of Promiſe, the immutability of his Counſel, confirmed it by an Oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong Aſſurance and Conſolation*, Heb. 6. 17, 18, *&c.*

But that which affords greater Matter of Thankfulneſs, is that theſe Mercies are not promiſed in general, but applied to every particular Member of the Church, who are here taught to ſay in the ſingular Number,

Number, *I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me*, &c.

Moreover,

Farther to enhance our Gratitude, we may Note this to be a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Favour; for the fallen Angels were wholly paſt by and neglected, who inſtead of being reſtored to a State of Salvation, are reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs to the Judgment of the great Day, *Jude* 6. *Heb.* 2. 15.

Yea, even among Mankind, the Heathen World of Old, and many barbarous Nations ſtill, never heard of this Call to a State of Salvation, but are left to grope on in Darkneſs; and if any of them find the way to Life, it muſt be with great hazard and uncertainty. However that be, 'tis neither our Duty or Diſcretion, to enquire or determin any thing of their final State. Our way lies plain before us, and we ſhall aſſuredly fare worſe than they, if we are not careful to walk in it.

To Conclude, We see here abundant Matter of Praise and Thanksgiving, and how fitly our Church hath taught every baptized Person to say, *I thank our heavenly Father, who hath called me*; &c.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Pſalm 5. Lat. part of the 2d Verſe, *Unto thee will I pray.*

I Am yet upon the Fourth Queſtion and Anſwer of the Catechiſm; in which the Catechumen having ſolemnly owned the Obligation of his baptiſmal Vow, and likewiſe made a thankful Acknowledgment of the many and great Benefits received thereby; both which have been ſpoken to. He is,

In the Laſt place, directed, to pray unto God, to be enabled to continue in that happy State, into which he is by this means admitted, in thoſe Words, *And I pray unto God to give me his Grace, that I may continue in the ſame unto my Life's end.*

In handling of which Words, I muſt conſider,

Firſt, The Act or Duty of Prayer, together with the Object to which it is directed; *I pray unto God*; or, *Unto thee will I pray.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The particular Matter here prayed for, *viz. to give me his Grace.*

Thirdly, The End or Deſign of it, *that I may continue in the ſame to my Life's end.* Of each of which ſomething diſtinctly. And,

1ſt, For the Act or Duty of Prayer. That may be defined to be a pious Addreſs of the Heart and Soul unto God, with a due Senſe of the divine Majeſty, and an humble Dependance upon him for the ſupply of all our Wants; where 'tis ſtiled,

Firſt, An Addreſs of the Heart; 'tis not a Buſineſs of the Tongue, as ſome would have it, or a Matter of Words, as too many make it; who put themſelves and others upon the daily Study and Invention of new Words for the ſame Things; but a Work of the Heart, and conſiſts in the inward Deſires and Breathings of the Soul after God. 'Twas the miſtake of the Heathens, to think they ſhould be heard for their much ſpeaking; and the Folly of the Phariſees, to place their Religion in long Prayers. And 'tis no leſs a Weakneſs of ſome in our Days, who think that

that God Almighty is taken with the Multitude, the Novelty, and Variety of Expreſſions; and therefore in all their Prayers, labour hard to addreſs to him in new Words. Whereas God neither regards any, nor many Words, he hears the ſilent Language of the Heart, and anſwers the ſecret Sighs and Breathings of a devout Soul; and to prevent many Words, he hath expreſly charged, *that our Words unto him ſhould be few*, Eccl. 5. 2. So that the great Work and Buſineſs of Prayer lies in the Heart, which is the only true Seat of all Devotion.

2dly, I ſtile it an Addreſs of the Heart and Soul unto God; and this teaches us the ſole Object to whom our Prayers are to be directed, *viz.* Not to Saints or Angels, or the Virgin *Mary*, as the manner of ſome is, but to God only; for 'tis written, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, Mat. 4. He hath ſtiled himſelf a God hearing Prayers, and therefore to him alone muſt all Fleſh come.

3dly, Prayer muſt be accompanied with a due ſenſe of the divine Majeſty; that is, not only with a ſenſe of his infinite Greatneſs

and Perfections, to beget in us the greater Awe and Reverence in our Approaches to him; but more particularly of his infinite Power and Ability to help us; and likewise, of his infinite Readiness and Willingness to grant, what according to his Will we shall ask of him. We are to address to the divine Majesty, with a grateful Sense of the Mercies we have already received; and that will both encourage him to give, and us to expect more, as our Necessities shall require.

Lastly, Our addressing to God in Prayer, must be attended with an humble dependance upon him, for the supply of all our wants. This is a necessary Ingredient of an acceptable and successful Prayer, which must be offered up with a deep sense of our wants, and our own Inability to supply them: As also, with a firm reliance upon the Power, Truth, and Faithfulness of him, we apply to for the relief of them; this is to ask in Faith, and a full Assurance of being heard; which adds an Efficacy, and procures an Answer to our Prayers.

Without this, we shall come wavering in Doubts and Uncertainties; still questioning either

either his Power or his Will, or both, to help us, which will marr the ſucceſs of all our Petitions; *For let not that Man think* (ſaith St. *James*) *that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded Man is unſtable in all his ways, and will be unſucceſsful in all his requeſts*, James 1. 7, 8.

Thus we ſee the Act or Duty of Prayer, which the Church here directs, and the Catechumen promiſes to offer unto God, in thoſe Words, *and I pray unto God.*

But what is the particular Matter here directed to be prayed for? Why that is for Grace to enable him to perform his Vow; *I pray unto God to give me his Grace*, &c.

By Grace here we are to underſtand, not any ſuch extraordinary Aſſiſtance, as may ſuperſede the Uſe of Means, or render our own Endeavours needleſs, but a ſuper-added Strength to our natural Faculties, to help our Infirmities, and make our Endeavours effectual: for God's beſtowing his Grace, is only his affording ſome ſpiritual Aid to our natural Powers, not his creating any new habit in an inſtant: he does not now over-power

our Faculties, nor influence our Souls by any irresistable Motions of his holy Spirit; but he graciously seconds our Endeavours, and furthers us with his Blessing in the Use of all good Means; and therefore we are required to do our part, by exerting the utmost of our Abilities; and where they fail, they shall be supplied, and supported too, by the Succours of divine Grace. Hence, tho' God is said to work all our Works in us and for us; and to work in us to will and to do according to his good Pleasure; yet we are called upon to work out our own Salvation, to signify, that we are to use the natural Powers that God hath given us, and co-operate with him, as far as they will reach towards our own Salvation. And when we thus do our best, he will supply what is wanting by the Assistance of his Grace, and crown all our Actions with Success and Victory. God Almighty delights to bless our Endeavours, and ever meets and encourages them with the desired Issue; but he dashes the vain Expectations of the slothful and negligent, and an idle superficial asking, instead of a Blessing, brings only Disappointment and a Curse: Hence our Blessed Saviour joyns watchfulness with prayer, *Watch and Pray (saith he) that*

ye

ye enter not into Temptation Mat : 26. 41. Thereby teaching us, that moral Induſtry in the uſe of all good means, is neceſſary to procure an Anſwer, and prevail for the Gracious Return of our Prayers. This Leſſon we are taught in that Divine Form, which Chriſt himſelf gave to his Diſciples, in which, tho we are directed to pray for our daily Bread, yet our Labour muſt accompany our Petitions, or elſe 'tis but vanity and preſumption to expect it : In like manner tho we are taught to pray againſt our Ghoſtly Enemies, and to be deliver'd from their Temptations, yet we are bid to reſiſt the Devil before he will flee from us ; and we muſt ſtrive againſt Sin in all its motions and occaſions, or elſe our ſtriveing againſt it in Prayer, , will be of no avail,

Our Petitions then for Grace, are to be attended with the other great Inſtuments of Religion, ſuch as Reading, Hearing, Meditating on Gods Word, together with all other Exerciſes of Vertue and a Holy Life, without which the Loudeſt and Longeſt Prayer, will find neither Audience, nor Acceptance. I have inſiſted the more on this, to Rectifie a dangerous miſtake of ſome, who Fondly imagine that Chriſt hath done all for them, and expects nothing but their Acceptance

ceptance of what he hath done; his Grace is free, say they, and is not Clog'd with any Conditions, so that tis but ask and have, tho they do nothing towards it.

This is a Delusion of Satan, or a false Suggestion of a corrupt and deceitful Heart, and will necessarily deprive such of all Grace and Favour at God's Hand, who harbor or lead their Lives by it, for God requires our Endeavours to go along with our Prayers, and will surely turn the deaf Ear to the Latter, where the former are wanting.

Thus yon see what is meant here by Grace, and likewise how it is to be Prayed for, in order to the obtaining it.

But for what end is the Catechumen here directed to Pray for God's Grace? That Our Third particular will inform us, which is, that he may be Enabled to continue in that State of Salvation, into which by Baptism he is receiv'd, unto his Lives end: So that tis Perseverance or Holding out to the End that is here made the Subject of our Prayers; which is a matter highly worthy of our Prayers; And likewise absolutely necessary to be Prayed for. First

First, I say, Grace to persevere to the End, is a matter highly worthy of our most Hearty & Affectionate Prayers; for tis this alone that Crowns our Actions, and Procures for us the promis'd Reward: *We shall reap, saith the Apostle, if we faint not*, Gal. 6. 9. If we hold out to the End of our Christian Race, we shall surely obtain the Prize, but if we faint and tyre, we shall reap nothing but shame and confusion: We must be Faithful unto Death, before we receive the Crown of Life; and tis they only that by patient Continuance in well doing seek for Glory, that shall receive Eternal Life.

The *Psalmist* tells us of some that Start aside like a broken Bow; and of others that Reel and Stagger like a Drunken man, and seem by their Fickleness and Instability to be at their wits End. This kind of Levity, and Inconstancy we find sharply Rebuk'd in the *Galatians*. Chap. the 3. where the *Apostle* asks, *who had bewitched them, that they should start from the Faith, which they had embraced?* And how they became so foolish, as having begun in the Spirit, they should end in the Flesh?

This then being a matter of such vast Consequence to us, our Eternal Happiness and Salvation entirely depending upon our holding out to the End; it highly concerns us to Pray for Grace to be Enabled to do so.

2dly. Again, as this is a matter highly worthy of our Prayers, so our Prayers are absolutely necessary to the Obtaining of it; for besides our Natural weakness, we are beset with so many, and such strong Temptations, that without the Assistance of Divine Grace, 'twil be impossible for us to Persevere, which we are therefore to call for by Diligent Prayer: Our Savieur Pray'd that St. *Peters Faith might not fail*, which was greatly in danger by the Siftings and Assaults of Satan: And ours would dayly and hourly fail too, without the continual Succours and Supplies of Divine Grace; and therefore we stand in continual need to Pray, that we may be kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation. 1. *Pet.* 1. 5. So that Perseverance is a Vertue, that not only deserves, but needs our earnest and fervent Prayers. Again,

Lastly,

Laſtly, As Prayer is the moſt neceſſary, ſo is it the moſt natural and proper means of obtaining this Grace; for it betokens that Humility and Dependance upon God, that highly tends to the ſucceſs of our Petitions; it ſhews a Senſe of our own Inability, for no Man will ſeek to another for that which he knows or thinks he can do for himſelf. Moreover, 'tis an acknowledgment of the infinite, Power, Fulneſs, and Sufficiency of God to help us, and likewiſe of his readineſs to do it; which will powerfully engage him to do that for us, which we cannot do for our ſelves.

Indeed, Prayer is the ordinary way and means of obtaining all that at God's Hand, that may be neceſſary or convenient for us; hence ſome have ſtiled it, The Key that opens to us the Gates of Heaven; others, The Wing upon which the Soul mounts up thither, and returns loaden with all neceſſary Bleſſings. 'Tis the means that God himſelf hath appointed to that end, and therefore he will not fail to bleſs it; *Call upon me* (ſaith he) *in the time of Trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me*, Pſal. 50. *Open thy Mouth wide and I will fill it*, Pſal. He

He hath made Prayer the Condition of all his Blessings; and therefore we find him declaring to the Israelites, *That tho' he had promised to bestow upon them many Mercies and Blessings, yet he expected to be sought unto, and to be called upon for them*, Ezek. 36. 27, 37.

For this reason it is, that our Church directs all that are by Baptism admitted into it, to pray to God, as for all other Blessings, so especially for Grace to continue in his Ways to their Lives end: *If any of you lack Wisdom* (saith St. *James*) that is, Grace or Wisdom to persevere, for so *Wisdom* must be understood in that place, *let them ask it of God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given unto him*, James 1. 5.

Where we have abundant Encouragement to Address for this Grace, from the happy Issue and Success of our Petitions: It shall be given unto us. God Almighty is never wanting to the hearty Desires and Endeavours of his People; and if we are not wanting to our selves, we cannot miss

miſs of Grace ſufficient for us: he is ever ready to hear and anſwer our Requeſts, and to bleſs our Endeavours with the deſired Iſſue.

Wherefore let us not forget to pray daily unto God to give us Grace, to continue ſtedfaſt in our Chriſtian Courſe to our Lives end. Thus we are here taught to pray for our ſelves; and elſewhere we are called upon to make our Prayers to Almighty God, in the behalf of every Child that is baptized, that he may lead the reſt of his Life according to that beginning.

To this end, let us frequently and ſeriouſly conſider both the danger of Apoſtacy, and the happineſs of Perſeverance.

For the Firſt, Unexpreſſibly great is the danger of Apoſtacy or Revolting from God, who hath threatned all ſuch Backſliders, with *eternal Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and the Glory of his Power. Better had it been* (ſaith St. *Peter*) *not to have known the Ways of Righteouſneſs, than having known them, to turn from the holy Commandment*, 1 Pet. Such will be glad at the laſt

laſt Day, to change Places in Hell with a Turk or an Infidel, who will find a more eaſy and tolerable Doom, than thoſe perfidious Renegadoes; ſuch Baſeneſs will heat the Furnace ſeven times hotter, and prepare thoſe flaming Ingredients of Wrath, that will heighten and encreaſe their Damnation. But as the Doom and Danger of Apoſtates is unſpeakable, ſo the Happineſs of ſound perſevering Chriſtians is unconceivable; *To him that overcometh* (ſaith the Spirit) *will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God*, Rev. 2. 7. They that overcome the Difficulties of Chriſtianity, and hold on the Profeſſion of it in ſincerity to the end, ſhall be reſtored to a far better Paradiſe, than that which our firſt Parents loſt; where the Tree of Life will render, not only their Perſons immortal, but their Bliſs indefectible: there will be no Serpent to beguile them, no Cherubims to guard the way to the Tree of Life, nor any flaming Sword to drive or keep them from it; but contrariwiſe, as there is nothing to bereave them of their Innocency, ſo neither can any thing hinder or impair their Happineſs: Inſomuch, that if we are faithful to the Death, we

ſhall

ſhall be ſure to recive a Crown of Life; a Crown, that can neither be forfeited nor eclipſed, but ſhall ſit for ever on our Heads, and ſhine there with a bright and never-fading Luſtre.

In a Word, They that perſevere in the Ways of Vertue to the End, ſhall be crowned at laſt with endleſs Glory and Felicity.

FINIS.